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old

Cat seeks cat,
sense of humour,
fur, non-smoker

GERMAN (AFP) — A cat seeking a cat, a sense of humour, fur, non-smoker

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in Sarajevo

Italian hermaphrodite
aged five, becomes boy

Israeli planes strike south Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — Israeli warplanes Monday raided suspected Hizbollah positions in south Lebanon, a security source said. Two jets fired a total of two rockets at the Hizbollah stronghold of the Iqlim Al Thufah hills just north of Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone. There were no immediate reports of casualties, the source said. The attack brought to 78 the number of Israeli air raids on Lebanon since the beginning of 1997. The last Israeli attack on the same area was on Nov. 7. Hizbollah (Party of God) guerrillas are fighting to oust Israeli forces and their local militia allies, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), from Israel 15 kilometres-wide occupation zone. It said it carried out attacks Sunday against SLA positions.

Jordan Times

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Extremists kill 69 tourists in bloodiest massacre in Egypt

LUXOR (AFP) — Islamists sprayed tourists with gunfire outside an ancient Egyptian temple in this southern town on Monday, killing at least 69 sightseers and three policemen, police said.

Many of the dead in the attack — the bloodiest ever by extremists seeking to set up an Islamist state in Egypt — were Japanese and Swiss holidaymakers.

Egypt's main armed Islamist group, the Gamaa Islamiyya, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Six of the assailants, who were believed to number around 10, were killed in a subsequent gunbattle with the security forces, police said.

At least 17 tourists and eight Egyptians were wounded in the attack which occurred around 10:00 a.m. local time at the entrance to Hatshepsut's temple in the Valley of the Queens on the west bank of the Nile, according to police.

A spokesman for the Isis travel agency in Luxor said the gunmen opened fire indiscriminately on tourists of various nationalities as they prepared to enter the temple, which is also known as Deir Bahri.

According to witnesses, the gunmen arrived at the popular tourist site aboard a tour bus stolen earlier in the day from the Isis travel agency.

The assailants got off the bus and opened fire with automatic weapons on tourists who were walking up a slope towards the temple dug out of rock, they said.

Police deployed in the area fought with the gunmen and six of the assailants were killed as they tried to head towards the mountains surrounding the temple and the desert, police said.

State television, citing a senior police official, said "all six terrorists were killed in a shoot-out with security forces," but witnesses said at least four of the assailants managed to get away.

Interior Minister Hassan Alfi immediately flew to Luxor, home to some of Egypt's main archaeological sites, and a medical team was also sent to the area.

The attack was the first in Luxor since Islamists launched an anti-government campaign in 1992 which has left more than 1,300 people dead including dozens of tourists.

The attack came two months after two Egyptian brothers firebombed a tourist bus outside the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, killing nine German holidaymakers and their driver.

Saber Abu Ola and his brother Mahmoud were sentenced to death last month by a military court for the attack, in a quick

King condolences Egyptians; Jordan condemns massacre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Monday condemned the criminal act in Luxor, southern Egypt, which resulted in the death of scores of Egyptians and foreign tourists.

His Majesty King Hussein phoned Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and condoled him over the death of scores of Egyptians and foreign tourists in the massacre. According to Jordan Television, King Hussein expressed Jordan's support for the Egyptian government and people in the face of such acts of violence. Jordanian Ambassador to Egypt Navef Qadhi confirmed on Monday that no Jordanian citizens were among the victims of the Luxor attack.

Minister of Information Samir Mutawi said: "Our

position on these criminal acts is crystal clear. We condemn such acts of violence and terrorism regardless of their source and who stands behind them."

Dr. Mutawi added that "we in Jordan support the Egyptian position vis-à-vis such acts of violence and express our deep condolences to the bereaved families and wish those injured a speedy recovery."

Dr. Mutawi said that these criminal acts which cause human and material losses sabotage the aspirations of the people in the region towards stability and peace. Such acts, he added, harm the Arab Nation's stand and weaken the world's support for Arab causes.

Jewish tourists, Luxor last month staged a performance of Verdi's opera Aida, which attracted thousands of opera fans from around the world including the wives of several world leaders and a number of celebrities.

Egypt depends heavily on revenues from its tourism industry and more than four million tourists visited Egypt during the year which ended in June.

Annan says Iraq's call for dialogue encouraging; Aziz proposal of equal representation in team rejected by U.S.

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ HAS CALLED for dialogue but on its own terms to defuse a crisis over U.N. arms inspections as U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wound up a tour of Gulf Arab states on Monday.

While the United States handed Russia and France the task of finding a diplomatic solution, Ms. Albright was met with opposition to a new conflict in the region during her visits to Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan Monday called "encouraging" Iraqi declarations that seem directed toward defusing a disarmament crisis between the Middle Eastern country and the United Nations.

"I think it's encouraging," Mr. Annan said after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein stated he did not seek confrontation with the United States.

"Everybody is trying to do whatever they can to avoid a conflict," Mr. Annan said. "I see Saddam's comments in this spirit."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein said late Monday that his country was not looking for a confrontation with the U.S. and wanted a solution with the U.N. Security Council "through dialogue."

And Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said Baghdad would allow the return of U.S. arms inspectors so long as they were on an equal footing with U.N. experts from other countries.

"If this formula is accepted, we would have no objections to the return of the American inspectors we expelled," Mr. Aziz was quoted as saying.

But a senior Clinton administration official travelling with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Saudi Arabia said the proposal represents an Iraqi attempt to dictate the makeup of the team and, therefore, could not be looked upon favourably.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, acknowledged there is a proportionately larger number of Americans on the team, but said this is because of the Americans' considerable expertise in the field of weapons inspections.

"We're not hostile to the Americans," Mr. Aziz said in what appeared to be a verbal softening of the Iraqi position as tension builds.

But he said Iraq does not want the U.S. to run the special commission of

weapons inspectors and that "the opinions of the American inspectors be accepted as irrefutable truths."

Mr. Aziz's description to Le Figaro appeared to be a more detailed account of Iraq's past proposal for a more "balanced" team.

The U.S. response was unenthusiastic. "We don't think [Saddam] is in a position to negotiate terms," and cooperation with U.N. inspections "should be without conditions," a White House official said.

With both sides sticking to their guns, Al Thawra, the newspaper of the ruling Baath Party, hit back on Monday to warn that Iraq would not be an easy target for military conquest.

The administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton "must understand that Iraq is not a Panama or a Haiti," said Al Thawra, referring to past U.S. military interventions.

Iraqi MPs, meanwhile, launched a campaign of anti-American graffiti on Monday by scrawling "Down with the U.S." with chalk on the steps of parliament and called for all Iraqis to follow suit.

Iraqi authorities took journalists to see more civilians who have moved into oil refineries, factories and presidential palaces to serve as human shields in case of U.S. attack.

Ms. Albright met on Sunday night with King Fahd, whose country served as the launchpad for Operation Desert Storm in the 1991 Gulf war when a U.S.-led coalition drove



Iraqi speaker of the National Assembly Saadoun Hammadi writes "Down with the U.S." in front of the National Assembly building Monday. President Saddam Hussein said he does not seek confrontation with the U.N. arms inspectors in Iraq, but it remained unclear on Monday whether diplomats could end the 20-day-old standoff peacefully (Renter photo)

U.S. troops or armaments because the U.S. already had enough assets in place for its current strategy. U.S. forces use bases in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, while Bahrain serves as the headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet.

Mr. Aziz left Paris for Morocco to begin a five-nation North African tour aimed at rallying Arab support in the dispute. He was scheduled to meet King Hassan later Monday and is scheduled to fly to Egypt for meetings with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, Tuesday.

On Sunday, a senior U.S. diplomat told CNN television that France and Russia "bore some responsibility" for the U.N. crisis with Iraq.

"[Russian] President [Boris] Yeltsin, [French] President [Jacques] Chirac, [and] a number of others, think they have influence with Iraq," said Thomas Pickering, undersecretary of state for political affairs.

"In part, they bore some responsibility for this crisis because they abstained on critical U.N. Security Council resolutions."

"I believe that they and the other members of the Security Council who abstained on a critical resolution a couple of weeks ago at least were a contributing factor, perhaps, to enabling [Iraqi President] Saddam or maybe encouraging Saddam with the feeling that the unity of the Security Council had fallen, that he could get away with confronting the Security Council," Mr. Pickering said.

France demands Iraq apply U.N. resolutions fully

PARIS (R) — France, urged by the United States to put pressure on Iraq, stressed on Monday it also demanded Baghdad apply U.N. resolutions and end its efforts to build weapons of mass destruction. Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said France, as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, wanted Iraq to comply fully with resolutions demanding cooperation with U.N. inspection teams. "Our role is to tell the Iraqis — apply them," he told Europe 1 Radio, referring to the U.N. resolutions.

Iraqi occupation forces out of Kuwait.

"The Saudis stressed the need to resolve it diplomatically," but "they don't see us as bellicose," said a senior U.S. official travelling with Ms. Albright.

"We did not discuss with them how long we are prepared to wait [before military action] or the options when we decide not to wait any longer," said the official, asking not to be named.

He said the secretary had not asked Gulf states for extra overflight rights or for the deployment of more

Ms. Albright herself has said that during her Gulf tour, she received "very sustained support" for the U.S. approach of "intense diplomacy complemented by a robust military posture."

But Bahrain called for "restraint" from all sides in the Iraq-U.N. crisis while Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said his country did "not support any military intervention against Iraq or by Iraq."

On Monday, he said Kuwait would not serve as a base for any attack.

Qatar lashes out at Egypt for launching 'unjustified campaign' on conference

DOHA (J.T.) — Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Jabr Al Thani Monday lashed out at Egypt accusing it of launching an unjustified personal attack against Qatar.

In a press conference held here at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference, Mr. Hamad criticised Egypt's boycott decision of the fourth annual MENA conference saying that it was not related to the conference.

aimed at integrating Israel into Middle Eastern economies.

"For six months, sisterly Egypt started an unjustified campaign that has no relation whatsoever with the conference," said Sheikh Hamad. "We totally reject the sarcastic and threatening style Egypt used against us."

Several Arab countries including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian National Authority and Morocco boycotted the three-day event.

Low-profile delegations attended the conference with less enthusiasm than it was witnessed in the previous three conferences that were held in Casablanca, Amman and Cairo respectively.

Sheikh Hamad refuted arguments implying American pressure on Qatar to hold the conference and insisted that it was the government's will and commitment to peace that were behind hosting the controversial event.

The Qatari minister implored Iraq to comply with United Nations resolutions and expressed hopes that the U.N.-Iraq standoff will be resolved diplomatically.

"We have no desire to see a military attack against Iraq," he said. "The Iraqi people are suffering and we must stand by them."

"But we totally object as we did in the past Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990."

MENA meeting torn over communiqué

DOHA (R) — A Middle East economic conference doomed from the start because of anger at Israel became embroiled on Monday in a dispute over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's resistance to swap land for peace with the Arabs.

Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Jabr Al Thani, Qatar's foreign minister, said Israel had objected to criticism in a proposed communiqué to end the three-day meeting on Tuesday. "There is negotiation in this," said Sheikh Hamad. "Israel has no reason to object and Israel has accepted (land for peace) before. It does not have the right to take it from the communiqué... There are some objections, yes," he told a news conference.

The U.S.-backed annual economic conference, launched in 1994 amid the euphoria of Israel's

breakthrough peace deals with the Palestinians and Jordan, have turned sour since the right-wing Netanyahu's election last year.

A majority of the 22-member Arab League boycotted the conference in protest at Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements and reluctance to hand over more land to Palestinians.

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky, leader of the Israeli delegation, told reporters: "I don't think it's the place of this conference to try to start formulating the principles of our agreement between us and Palestinians."

The Qatari foreign minister launched into an unprecedented attack on Egypt for boycotting the conference, accusing it of masterminding a failed coup in Qatar in 1996.

'Jordanians pay most for water among Arabs'

From Hind-Lara Mango in Doha

JORDANIANS PAY the highest price for water among the Arab peoples. Hazim Nasser, a senior advisor at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation in Jordan, told the fourth Doha Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference yesterday.

Addressing a session at the conference under the theme: "Changing Policy Directions of Water Management," Mr. Nasser explained to potential investors and water experts that Jordanians pay over one dollar per cubic metre of water for domestic use and more than \$2 for industrial use.

Mr. Nasser emphasised the need for investment in water infrastructure in the MENA region. "Three fourths of the MENA region is arid. And it has five per cent of the world's population and less than one per cent of the world's renewable water," he said.

Government investment in the water sector accounts for one third of total expenditure in Jordan's five-year development plan, he said. Jordan is witnessing an overmining of ground water and increasing water pollution that will lead to major challenges and health hazards, said Mr. Nasser.

"There is an immediate need for increased investment in water and wastewater management,"

He suggested that finances for water management could be secured through international donors, and private sector concessions. Technological developments such as desalination, and conservation are costly, panelists agreed. But populations could be mobilised to ensure water-saving and water-resource management.

Meir Ben-Meir, the Israeli water commission-

er, told the panel that the issue of water is a tragic one for all the peoples of the region. He said that desalinated sea water is badly needed, but expensive.

The use of desalinated water in agriculture would be very costly and would not be affordable by the poor, he said. Farming would be abandoned leading to migration to the outskirts of urban areas and to the creation of slums.

Mr. Meir said that 50 per cent of Israel is desert and if irrigation water is not made available desertification will creep in.

"Water, energy and the environment, are triplets," Muthder Haddadin, minister of water and irrigation, commented at this session. He added that no one could think of eliminating agriculture from societies that have depended on this sector for their livelihoods.

"Agriculture is deep-rooted in the culture of the region and is an integral part of it," Dr. Haddadin said. Agriculture can survive on treated wastewater coming from urban areas, he said. He warned though that caution should be taken when utilising modern technology for this end.

Dr. Haddadin concluded that the object of water-management is to serve the people, to provide them with water at a low cost. Economic and political factors have to be considered as the issue of water has a direct relation to food production.

Panelists agreed that water management, desalination, and conservation policies in the Middle East and North Africa region are changing to meet the challenge of water scarcity. Water management is an issue high on the agenda of these countries particularly Jordan as it suffers from water shortages and needs to find ways of providing its people with water at a low cost.

U.S. firm launches fund for Palestinians, Jordan

DOHA (AFP) — A U.S.-based firm launched a \$60 million fund here Monday with the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) targeting the Palestinian territories and Jordan.

OPIC, a quasi-governmental organisation that supports private projects in developing countries, is providing financing worth \$40 million to the fund, officials said during the signing at a regional conference here.

The remaining \$20 million is being raised from Qatar and other countries in the region by Capital Investment Management Corporation (CIMC), based in McLean, Virginia.

Some \$10 million has been committed by Qatari investors with further funds expected from them, while CIMC will seek additional capital from other Gulf and Middle East investors, said Scott Stupay, a partner at CIMC.

Mr. Stupay said he hoped the capital of the closed-end fund would eventually rise to \$100 million, while investment is expected to start in four to six months.

Some 60 per cent of the funds will be invested in the West Bank and Gaza, while 40 per cent will go into Jordan. The managers, International Capital Advisors, an affiliate of CIMC, will be investing in new businesses and venture capital in service and manufacturing industries. The OPIC financing will be in the form of a soft loan to the fund, that will be raised separately and which is guaranteed by OPIC. The remaining capital will have no guarantees.



HEBRON CLASHES: An Israeli soldier fails to prevent a Jewish settler from hurling stones back at stone-throwing Palestinians as troops arrive on the scene of unrest near the Jewish settlement in the heart of this Palestinian town Monday. Two Arabs were wounded by rubber bullets during the clashes which broke out in protest against the capture of two Palestinian militants by Israel from the hands of Palestinian police last week (Reuters photo)

Palestinians, Israelis clash in Hebron and Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Palestinian students clashed with Israeli soldiers during protests in the West Bank towns of Bethlehem and Hebron on Monday, witnesses said.

In Bethlehem, several dozen university students threw stones at Israeli soldiers guarding a Jewish holy site after they visited the family of a Palestinian boy who was shot dead by the soldiers last week.

The soldiers fired back with volleys of teargas and rubber-coated bullets, and ambulance staff said two Palestinians were wounded. The soldiers had come

under rock-throwing earlier in the morning by a group of schoolgirls who had also come to visit the family of Ali Jawarish, 9, who was shot dead by a soldier during protests at the same site on Tuesday.

Similar clashes broke out on Sunday after the funeral of Jawarish, during which a Palestinian photographer was lightly injured by a rubber-coated bullet.

Meanwhile in Hebron, around two dozen Islamist students threw stones and two pipe bombs at soldiers on the edge of the Israeli-controlled zone of the city, and the soldiers responded

by firing rubber-coated bullets, witnesses said.

Jewish settlers in a nearby enclave also threw stones at the protesters, witnesses said. No injuries were reported and the clashes eased after an hour.

The protesters had come from a protest march by some 150 students from Islamic groups in Hebron University, who were demonstrating against both the Palestinian security services and Israel over the arrest of Hamas and Islamic Jihad militants.

The students marched to Red Cross offices in Hebron to demonstrate for

the release of Itaf Elayan, a member of the radical Islamic Jihad group who has been on hunger strike since her arrest by Israel on Oct. 21.

Jihad issued a statement Monday calling on the Red Cross to fulfil its "international responsibilities" to ensure the health of Ms. Elayan, who has been moved to a prison hospital.

The group also repeated warnings that Israel would "pay a very heavy price" if Ms. Elayan, a woman who was arrested in a general Israeli sweep against Islamic militants, dies from her hunger strike.

PNA officials accuse Jewish state of spreading rumours on Arafat's health

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian officials on Sunday accused Israel of cooking up stories that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is in poor health and could be suffering from Parkinson's disease.

The head of Palestinian Preventive Security in the Gaza Strip, Mohammad Dahlan, blamed the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for starting the rumours.

Israeli neurologists said earlier Sunday that Mr. Arafat's trembling lips and hands — obvious in several recent public appearances — could suggest he suffers from Parkinson's, a disease of the nervous system.

"The main source releasing all these claims is the office of the prime minister and especially [Netanyahu's media advisor] David Bar-Illan," said Mr. Dahlan in a special broadcast on Palestinian television.

"No one knows Arafat's fate and everyone has his own lifespan," he said.

The question of the health of the 69-year-old president has been raised frequently after his lips and hands have trembled during public appearances, most recently on Saturday during a press conference in Switzerland.

Mr. Arafat's frail appearance has led to an atmosphere of "Kremlin-watching" over his health, raising the anger of Palestinian officials, for whom the question — and the more sensitive issue of who would succeed the veteran PNA leader — is a taboo subject.

But Mr. Arafat told journalists who asked about his trembling on Saturday in Bern that he has "had this problem since the aircraft crash" in reference to the accident in 1992. "And also I am tired since I haven't slept these last three days. I had to get up at five o'clock

this morning to meet with Albright," Arafat added.

Speculation among doctors has focused on Parkinson's disease, a disorder which destroys brain cells and over time can lead to violent and irrational behaviour.

A professor of neurology at Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital, Avinoam Reikhes, told AFP that, based on only the visible evidence of Mr. Arafat's trembling, he may suffer from Parkinson's, but "at a very early stage."

"In several months we will know with more certainty from what he is suffering, given what is known about the course of the disease," he said.

Parkinson's "leads to a degeneration in motor skills. Arafat may have more and more difficulty moving, writing or speaking," Dr. Reikhes said.

The Al Hayat newspaper last week reported Palestinian

Preventive Security chief in the West Bank, Jibril Rajub, was positioning himself to take Mr. Arafat's place in case something should happen to him.

But Mr. Dahlan vehemently denied the report.

"We are not a gang," Mr. Dahlan said. "We are the inheritors of a long struggle and we will be faithful to the training Arafat has given us. Our duty will only be to preserve the legitimate institutions of the PNA and we will remain faithful to this duty."

"We are not competing with each other," Mr. Dahlan added. "If we examine the source of all these reports, we find only the Israelis."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak suggested to Mr. Arafat in a meeting with him in Cairo Saturday that he "change his work style and not work so many hours," Mr. Arafat's spokesman, Marwan Kanafani, told the television.

Iraqi Kurdish group says it pushed back rival in clashes

ANKARA (R) — A Turkish-backed Iraqi Kurdish militia said on Monday it had pushed back its rival in heavy fighting over the weekend near Iraq's northern border with Iran, a spokesman said.

"KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party] forces have managed to secure, or recapture, some of the positions taken earlier by joint forces of the PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] and PKK [Kurdish Labour Party]," KDP Ankara spokesman Safen Dizayee told Reuters.

The spokesman said his group had retaken a number of strategic positions and mountain tops around the town of Sedakan, some 20 kilometres from Iraq's border with Iran.

A PUK spokesman said their forces had been withdrawing from Sedakan over the last week and Turkish jets had launched bombing raids early Monday.

"This morning the Turkish air raids were concentrated on

PUK positions and a civilian village called Qasre," said Shazad Saib, Qasre is south of Sedakan overlooking the strategic Hamilton Road which links north Iraq to Iran.

Turkish military sources were not available for comment, but Turkey says its air strikes are aimed only at the Turkish Kurd group, which has bases in the mountainous region.

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz discussed northern Iraq with army chief Ismail Hakkı Karadayi and Foreign Minister Ismail Cem at an unscheduled meeting Monday, state-run Anatolian News Agency said.

Mr. Karadayi told reporters they made "a general evaluation" of the situation in the Kurdish enclave.

The KDP said it had started the latest offensive on Sunday against its Iraqi Kurd rival, the PUK, and their Turkish Kurd allies, the PKK, for control of the mountainous region.

The Iraqi Kurd factions have ruled northern Iraq since it slipped from Baghdad's control at end of the 1991 Gulf war. Frequent feuds between them have upset a Western-backed peace process between Jalal Talabani's PUK and Massoud Barzani's KDP.

Mr. Talabani's group said the latest offensive by Mr. Barzani's forces was backed by Turkish planes, tanks and troops.

"The offensives involved scores of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, airborne Turkish commandos were parachuted onto Sari Hassan Beg mountain [Sedakan sector]," a PUK statement said.

It said Turkish tanks were currently deployed in Sedakan after one Turkish tank was destroyed in the fighting.

KDP Radio, monitored by Turkey's state-run Anatolian news agency, said 34 PUK "Peshmarga" fighters had been killed in the latest clashes and four captured.

'Algerian army kills 15 militants'

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian security forces killed a group of around 15 armed men at a town south-east of Algiers, reported the daily Al Watan Monday.

The daily added that the group leader, or "emir," "a dangerous terrorist sought by security forces," was also killed in the clash, which took place at Khemis Khachna (formerly known as Fondouk) Sunday.

Two more "terrorists" were "neutralised" in central Algiers as they were preparing a bomb attack, added the newspaper which gave no other details on the incident.

"Terrorist" is the term often used for members of the Islamist insurgency against President Liamine Zeroual's military-backed regime which flared up in 1992, when the military cancelled elections that the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win.

The daily La Tribune also reported the killing of a veteran Islamist war leader, Said Makhloufi, in the south-western region of Bechar. No further details were given.

The newspaper Liberte reported that a 14-member gang specialised in planting bombs had been broken up in Berroughia in south-west Algeria, and that two Islamists had been killed by a local defence brigade in the same region.

Kuwaiti MP wants gas masks distributed

KUWAIT (AFP) — A Kuwaiti MP proposed handing out gas masks to the population Monday for fear that Iraq might use chemical weapons in any confrontation with the United States.

"Because of the worsening of the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations, and the possibility of an imminent military confrontation which could push the Iraqi regime into using chemical weapons against its neighbours, I propose that gas masks be distributed free to all residents

of Kuwait," Fahd Mith told the daily newspaper Al Anbaa.

The pro-government MP is the head of the Kuwaiti parliament's committee for home and defence affairs.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a brief visit to Kuwait Sunday as part of a Gulf tour. She said "diplomacy" was "the best way" of solving the crisis with Iraq. But she added that Washington "does not rule out other options if diplomacy fails."

PNA says Israel abducted suspects, wants them back

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A senior Palestinian security official accused Israel on Monday of abducting two suspected Islamist militants and beating Palestinian policemen who were guarding them.

The Israeli army denied soldiers beat Palestinian policemen and said they were detained just long enough to establish their identities.

Major General Abdul Razek Al Majaydah, director of public security in the Gaza Strip, demanded that Israel return the two sus-

pects, seized at a roadblock in the West Bank late on Thursday.

"It was an abduction process. The two were kidnapped at a trap near Hawara by the Israeli forces who abducted them and the guards who were held for 24 hours and beaten by the Israelis," Maj. Gen. Majaydah told Reuters.

Israel said last week it had seized Jamal Abdul Faah Hor and Abdul Rahman Ismail Ghneimat from Palestinian security officials who were transport-

ing them from one West Bank town to another.

Their van was stopped at a roadblock in an area of the West Bank still under Israeli control.

An army spokesman said the two detainees, from the Sourif village in the West Bank, ran a "terrorist cell" of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) which had killed 11 Israelis.

He said 12 members of the Palestinian preventive security guarding the suspects were detained briefly.

"Once their identities

were established they were immediately released. The claim that they were beaten is false," the spokesman said Monday.

Maj. Gen. Majaydah's remarks were the first official reaction by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) since Thursday's incident.

They followed Palestinian protests and accusations by Hamas that the PNA had "collaborated" with Israel for a handover of the suspects.

"We see the arrest of the two as a charade hiding the

direct handover by the PNA security service to the enemy soldiers," Hamas said in a leaflet faxed to Reuters on Sunday.

Around 300 students marched Sunday in the streets of Sourif, chanting slogans describing the arrest as security cooperation with "the Zionist enemy."

The demonstrators hurled stones at the Hebron headquarters of the Palestinian preventive security service which had custody of the two.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandokan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
15:30 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 You Bet Your Life
20:00 Doc. — Skeleton Coast
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Margaret Volant
23:15 The Guilty

PRAYER TIMES

04:42 Fajr
06:02 (Sunrise) Duha
11:21 Dhuhur
14:15 Asr
16:40 Maghrib
18:00 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel.

661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.

622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church

Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel.

771751.

Amman International Church

Tel. 5516345

Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

Church of Nazarene Tel.

675691.

The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel.

614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to drop slightly with skies partly cloudy. There will be a chance of scattered showers in the northern

and central parts of the Kingdom, and winds becoming southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 11/19

Aqaba 17/27

Deserts 09/21

Jordan Valley 16/27

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 22, Aqaba 28 Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh 827195

Dr. Yousef Nasser 751144

Dr. Sa'id Tawfiq 788285

Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairoutch pharmacy 623672

Ghazi Ta'ameh 250080

IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852

Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Rafib Atallah 994424

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Dept. 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 0853200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity 644281/6

Aldhah Maternity 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Musharraf Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Mutajreen 77101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital

602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 0853200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 Sanaa (RJ)

07:25 Damascus (RJ)

09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

09:25 Aqaba (add) (RJ)

10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

10:20 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

16:20 Cairo (RJ)

17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)

22:50 Doha (add) (RJ)

ish state of
afat's health

Preventive Security chief in the West Bank, Jibril Rajab, was positioning himself to take Mr. Arafat's place in case something should happen to him.

But Mr. Dahlan vehemently denied the report.

"We are not a gang," Mr. Dahlan said. "We are the protectors of a long and honorable tradition. We will be faithful to the training Arafat has given us. Our duty will only be to serve the legitimate interests of the PNA and to remain faithful to the PNA."

"We are not competing with each other," Mr. Dahlan added. "If we come to a situation where all the reports find only the Israelis."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak suggested to Mr. Arafat in a meeting with him in Cairo Saturday that he change his work style and not work so many hours.

Mr. Arafat spoke at the television



SEMINAR ON JERUSALEM OPENS: A seminar on Jerusalem entitled "Five-Thousand Years of Arab Rights" is opened Monday at the University of Jordan (UJ) by UJ Vice President for Scientific Faculties Issam Za'balawi. The focus of the seminar is the role of Jerusalem in Arab and Islamic history. The seminar was organised by the Ministry of Education and the General Islamic Congress for Jerusalem, in cooperation with UJ and Yarmouk, Mutah, and Al al Bayt Universities (Petra photo)

Princess Sumaya opens dermatology conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputising for HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, HRH Princess Sumaya Monday attended the opening ceremony of the Second International Dermatology Conference.

"We should continue developing our health programmes and guarantee health care for all our people. Prevention is the first

step in the health care system," the Princess said.

The three-day conference, which was organised by the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), the Middle East Society for Skin Surgery, and Jordan Television, aims at acquainting the participants with new surgical techniques, including the use of laser.

Participants from Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, France, Italy, Greece, the U.S., Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia are taking part.

During the conference, 40 working papers will be submitted on the uses of laser as a new device in treating skin diseases.

Workshop focusing on safe motherhood, infant health opens

AMMAN (Petra) — A workshop entitled "Safe Motherhood in Jordan" was held Monday with the participation of 80 specialists and health officials representing government ministries, voluntary groups, and other concerned organisations.

The organisers — the Safe Motherhood Committee in Jordan, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) — said the participants reviewed working papers focusing on mortality rates among new-born infants, maternal deaths, the mother and child situation in Jordan, and UNICEF's 1998-2002 Safe Motherhood Programme.

The participants dis-

cussed family planning, health education, and the rights of pregnant women, among other relevant issues, according to the organisers.

Opening the workshop on behalf of the minister of health and medical care, Makram Nshewat, the head of the Safe Motherhood Committee, stressed the need for promoting education among the community on safe motherhood and birth spacing, which he said are the basic elements of ensuring primary health care.

Underdeveloped regions, he said, have been suffering from high rates of maternal deaths and infant mortality due to the lack of sufficient primary health care services.

Referring to the Ministry of Health and Medical Care's contribution to safe motherhood, he said the ministry has opened and has been supervising the work of a great number of mother and child care centres, which have been providing medical supervision of 90 per cent of the child deliveries in the country.

He expressed hope that this rate will increase through the appropriate health education.

UNICEF representative Ayman Abu Laban outlined the assistance provided by the organisation to the Kingdom's various health centres for safe motherhood activities.

Children's reading skills stressed at information workshop

By Suha Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Children should be encouraged to develop reading skills by going to libraries and presenting dialogues, lectures, and presentations, said Yusra Abu Ajamieh, a representative from the Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation at the "Information and Our Daily Lives" workshop yesterday.

Ms. Ajamieh talked about the types of services the foundation offers for its patrons, such as the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI), an advanced service that provides the user with information and a summary on a certain article.

"In order to disseminate the information, the library must have a customer's file which

includes the user's name, address, and the subjects in which the user is interested," added Ms. Ajamieh.

Moreover, the patron provides the library with remarks and comments to update the file.

She stressed the need for specialisation among libraries regarding periodicals, with a view to saving time and money.

She also spoke on the organisation resulting from the decimal system, which includes the title, subjects, numbers, initials, and relevant items.

She gave the example of the Ohio Computerised Library Centre (OCLC) in the U.S., where books are classified once and do not need reclassification in different libraries.

Belgian tourist group opens meeting here

AMMAN (Petra) — The Belgian society of travel agents and tour operators Monday opened its annual meeting in Amman with the attendance of 111 of its members.

The meeting was addressed by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji, who thanked them for choosing Jordan as the venue for their annual event and pointed out that the Kingdom enjoys safety, security, and stability, which are essential elements for the tourism industry.

The annual conference coincides with the commencement of a major campaign by the Ministry of Tourism, in association with travel agencies, tour operators, hotels, and tourist guides, to market Jordan abroad.

Noting that the number

Al Majd set to resume publication next week

Plans under way to publish as evening daily — editor

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Majd weekly newspaper, one of 13 weeklies suspended in late September, is scheduled to resume publication next Monday, according to a press release yesterday.

The weeklies were suspended from publication for having failed to comply with an amendment to

the 1993 Press and Publications Law that required weekly newspapers to raise their registered capital to JD300,000 from JD15,000.

The government demanded that the newspapers pay the capital requirement in full, and papers that could not or did not demonstrate fully-paid capital were suspended.

Al Majd Editor-in-Chief

Fahed Rimawi, who is also the official owner, said the paper put up a capital of JD300,416 by securing loans. He also said Al Majd management is currently making arrangements for a private shareholding company to assume ownership of Al Majd's licence to publish.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Mr. Rimawi also disclosed that Al Majd and its

potential investors are presently "in phase one of a plan to publish Al Majd as an evening daily with some important partners."

Mr. Rimawi would not disclose their names, but said he is expecting several former officials to contribute to the project and to the editorial content of the paper.

Al Majd is the only weekly of the 13 suspended to have retained its

licence. The Press and Publications Department Sunday officially revoked the licences of the remaining 12, one week prior to a Higher Court of Justice ruling on a case brought by the weeklies against the government over the May temporary amendments to the press law.

President of the Higher Court Farouq Kilani will give a final ruling on the case next Sunday.

Free cancer exams to last until Nov. 27

AMMAN (J.T.) — The programme of free cancer examinations for the public that opened at Al Amal Cancer Centre in Amman on His Majesty King Hussein's birthday will continue until Nov. 27, according to centre sources quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Monday.

The centre, which started operations last April, has been flooded with citizens requesting examinations, according to the sources.

The centre so far has offered services to 100 citizens and provided advice on preventive measures against cancer, according to the sources.

The 120-bed regional cancer research centre is equipped for highly advanced therapies such as bone marrow transplants and adult and paediatric chemotherapy.

It includes outpatient clinics and radio diagnostic, radio therapy, and nuclear medicine departments.

The centre, which offers early detection services for cancer, also gives advice on quitting smoking and healthy eating habits.

The sources noted that the centre, a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, has so far offered treatment for cancer to 300 patients from Jordan and other Arab countries.

The centre was created through contributions from Jordanian citizens and institutions. Organisations in the Netherlands and other countries also assisted in setting up and supplying equipment for the centre, considered to be the first comprehensive cancer research foundation in the region.

Minister says Doha conference provides opportunity for attracting investments

From Hind-Lara Mango in Doha

MINISTER OF Water and Irrigation Munther Haddadin affirmed that a conference such as the Doha MENA conference provides good opportunities for Jordan to attract investment for projects such as the Jordan Rift Valley (JRV) project.

The minister will make two presentations today on JRV water projects, under the "Regional Infrastructure Projects Presentation" plenary and the business strategy study.

He will be sharing the panel with Israeli Minister of Trade and Industry Nathan Sharansky and Yehzekel Daskal, director general of the Israel Airport Authority, later in the day.

The Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal Project, included in the JRV, aims at generat-

ing fresh water and will be multifaceted in nature, explained the minister, adding that "this project would involve Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians."

Dr. Haddadin told the Jordan Times that the Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal Project would be beneficial to all parties, not just Jordan.

With the availability of water, the conduit would open opportunities for development and the establishment of villages, and the generation of sustainable jobs in tourism and aquaculture.

"One can also think of hubs that could be established in that region, which would serve not only Jordan but also Israel and the vicinity," Dr. Haddadin stated.

As for the role of the private sector in this project, the minister said various projects are open to this

sector, including aquaculture, agriculture, transportation, the logistics hub, and tourism.

The private sector could be involved in the infrastructure projects of the Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal, particularly in the wells that would produce fresh water.

Even though the JRV project has been in the planning stages for some time, the master plan has been finalised, said Dr. Haddadin, adding that this plan has been reviewed with the Israelis and both countries are in agreement on the details.

Feasibility studies on the Red Sea-Dead Sea Conduit have been conducted. Dr. Haddadin said he met with Israeli Minister of Infrastructure Ariel Sharon and an agreement has been reached on these plans.

In response to a question

on whether Jordan had been approached by private sector investors for some projects, Dr. Haddadin confirmed that Jordan had been contacted by "some parties" prior to this conference.

He elaborated that some of these parties are interested in setting up "Qualifying Industrial Zones."

"These will have to be built on Jordanian and Israeli territories to qualify for all the exceptions that the U.S. market and government provides for such zones," the minister said.

The Jordanian private sector has also expressed interest in the agricultural projects in the JRV.

"Israeli businesses have expressed interest in establishing joint agricultural projects on the border between the two countries south of the Dead Sea," he stated.

Professional association council freezes membership due to participation at Doha

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Presidents of Professional Associations in Jordan has decided to freeze the membership of the Jordan Contractors Association (JCA) because its president, Wa'el Touqan, has attended the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Conference in Doha.

A report in the local press Monday quoted the council's chairman Hussein Mjalli as saying the decision was taken during a closed door session and approved by the council members.

Mr. Touqan reneged on his pledge, which was sent in a letter to the council following his election as president of his association more than a year ago, that he was committed to resist any form of normalisation with Israel, he said.

Mr. Touqan's attendance at the Doha meeting is in violation of the JCA general assembly's decision against the normalisation of relations with Israel, according to Mr. Mjalli.

The council, during its Sunday meeting, also discussed the sanctions imposed on Iraq, he said.

that sanctions were imposed on Iraq at a time when the Arab sanctions and boycott of Israeli goods are being lifted.

He said it was not logical for the Arabs to demand that Germany, France, and Russia interfere and help end the sanctions on Iraq at a time when they are doing nothing themselves to lift these sanctions. Arab countries, including Jordan, should take the initiative and lift these sanctions, he added.

The council has decided to send a memorandum to the government demanding that it lift the sanctions

on Iraq and condemning Jordan's participation in the Doha summit, he stated.

The council has decided to be part of a popular delegation that will visit Iraq to express solidarity with the Iraqi people and back Baghdad's steadfastness in the face of the American pressures, according to Mr. Mjalli.

The council has decided also to launch a fund-raising campaign to provide assistance to the Iraqis who, he said, have been suffering under the sanctions for the past seven years.

Reorganised national committee aims to increase women's role in society

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — With more technocrats and experienced activists within its ranks, from both governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the National Committee for Jordanian Women (NCJW) is expected to help women play a greater role in society, according to NCJW General Secretary Amal Sabbagh.

The difference between the current committee's formation and that of the previous committee is that we [the NCJW] have appointed a large number of members who are specialised in certain fields, such as law, and others who have experience in working for women-related issues and governmental or electoral fields," Ms. Sabbagh said.

Noting that current participation by women in government was at a "token" level, Ms. Sabbagh said "Jordanian women are ready for a much more active role in public life."

Emily Nafa'a, who will represent the General

Union of Voluntary Societies within the NCJW's framework, said "the NCJW aims at forming a strategy to activate the role of women and change the social stereotype of women that stands in their way of reaching decision-making positions."

Ms. Nafa'a, a candidate in the recent elections, said she "considers it a step forward that 700 clarity societies will be represented [within the ranks of the NCJW]."

She stressed that civil society institutions should not be marginalised as women face more difficult challenges at the beginning of the 21st century.

On the results of the last elections, Ms. Sabbagh said that "in certain cases, society showed its readiness to accept women."

According to the results of the last elections, Ms. Nafa'a, who ran for the Christian minority seat in the 3rd district, received around 2,000 votes and Toujan Faisal, who in 1993 became the first woman to enter Parliament, received 4,277 votes for the Circassian minority seat.

This total is more than twice the number of votes she received in the 1993 elections and 60 votes less than Ali Abul Ragheb, who ran for the Muslim majority seat in the same district, election results showed.

The NCJW, which is chaired by HRH Princess Basma, has added a coordinating sub-committee to deal with government organisations, in addition to the existing NGO coordinating sub-committee, said Ms. Sabbagh.

She added that the right people are in place to effect changes for women until the year 2001.

Regarding the role of technocrats from governmental organisations, the NCJW 12-person legal committee will review legislation related to women's issues and consult with the current minister of justice, Riyad Shakkat, the previous minister of justice, Rafeq Wazani, the Senate legal committee's representative, and the head of the Lower House's legal committee.

The NCJW will also include representatives from the ministries of

planning and development affairs, the under-secretaries of the ministries of works, municipal and rural affairs and the environment, and education and higher education, and Shiam Bayyadeh as a representative of women working at governmental departments.

Moreover, representatives from NGOs will include: the General Federation of Labour Unions General Secretary Abdul Halim Khaddam, Director of the General Federation of Jordanian Women Najwa Nouri, the Jordanian Women's Union director Amneh Zu'bi, the Jordanian National Federation for Women director Maiy Abu Sameo, a representative of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Shadia Nusair on behalf of the Queen Alia Fund.

Earlier, the Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre declared that it would conduct a comprehensive evaluation of women's participation in the last elections as both voters and candidates to aid the formation of the NCJW's proposed strategy.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM
* "Tai Pan" at the British Council, Jabbal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
FIFTH JORDANIAN THEATRE FESTIVAL
* Two plays entitled "The Martyrs Return" and "In

Search of Nofan" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., respectively.
LECTURE
* "Europe, the United States, and the Middle East: Transatlantic Policies and Differences in the Distribution of Work" (in Arabic) by Dr. Volker Perthes at the World Affairs Council at 6:00 p.m.
EXHIBITIONS
* "Portrait '97" — works by

over thirty Arab artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uthaina, until Nov. 30.
* Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until Dec. 10.
* Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Bashar Kathem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 6991312) until Dec. 15.
* Paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31.

Hakim at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5336098), until Nov. 22.
* "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.
* Paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31.

Time	Event
12:00	Princess Sumaya opens dermatology conference
12:30	Workshop focusing on safe motherhood, infant health opens
13:00	Children's reading skills stressed at information workshop
13:30	Belgian tourist group opens meeting here
14:00	Al Majd set to resume publication next week
14:30	Minister says Doha conference provides opportunity for attracting investments
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25:00	What's Going On

Pakistan PM denies contempt allegations before top court

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Monday denied contempt allegations in an unprecedented appearance before the Supreme Court by a Pakistani chief executive.

"I hold the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court of Pakistan, in great esteem," Mr. Sharif told judges bearing a petition accusing him and several of his parliamentary colleagues of having ridiculed the judiciary.

The case has assumed national importance as a conviction could expose Mr. Sharif and his fellow deputies to disqualification from parliament. Hundreds of activists of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League assembled outside the heavily guarded court building here and scuffled with the police, witnesses said.

Mr. Sharif, emerging from his limousine as he left the court, waved to the slogan-chanting crowd. Afterwards a section clashed with the police who

used batons to scatter them, leading to brawls in which one police constable was severely beaten before being rescued.

Several people sustained minor injuries, witnesses said.

"I can never imagine contempt of court," said Mr. Sharif in a statement in the national language, Urdu, read out by his counsel S. M. Zafar before the five-judge panel headed by Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah.

The premier, who appeared together with the other dozen respondents in the case, said "I have neither committed contempt of court, nor do I intend to do that."

He however expressed "sorrow" if any of his statements in the performance of his duty were "deemed" by any judge to be in contempt.

"I believe the appearance of the chief executive before the judiciary is an historic event," he said. The court adjourned the hearing until Tuesday,

exempting Mr. Sharif from personally attending after his counsel said his client had important state business, referring to the visit of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, due late Monday.

Mr. Zafar also moved an application that Mr. Sharif be exempted from personal appearance during future proceedings.

The petitioner, Chaudhry Mohammad Akram, has alleged that Mr. Sharif and his colleagues made contemptuous remarks against the chief justice during a recent row with the judiciary over the appointment of judges.

The dispute, which centred on the government's refusal to accept Mr. Shah's demand that five high court judges be raised to the Supreme Court, was defused when on Oct. 30, Sharif backed off and accepted the demand.

The "scandalous" remarks were allegedly made in the National Assembly and outside after the court put a temporary

freeze late last month on a constitutional provision introduced by the government to curb floor-crossing in parliament.

In a legal challenge to the clause, several petitioners have claimed it gave arbitrary powers to heads of political parties to unseat a dissenting deputy, stifling free expression.

The case over the controversial 14th constitutional amendment remains pending, but it has been overshadowed by the contempt proceedings that sparked a national debate over the powers of the executive and judiciary.

Bumpy relations with the Shah-led court are seen as a problem for Mr. Sharif who otherwise got a massive mandate in February elections and swiftly clipped presidential powers to dissolve the National Assembly.

The discretionary authority, taken away through a constitutional amendment, was used by successive presidents since 1988 to sack elected governments.



Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif waves to his Pakistan Muslim League Party supporters outside the Supreme Court building in Islamabad after he faced a contempt of court hearing (Renter photo)

Russia faces uphill budget battle over Chubais scandal

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Russian government faced an uphill task getting its tough 1998 budget through parliament this week after its main author, Finance Minister Anatoly Chubais, was embroiled in a book payments scandal.

The leftist opposition appeared set to ambush the package when it comes up for debate Wednesday despite having agreed a compromise draft thrashed out by a conciliation mission following a political crisis last month.

Communist Party chief Gennady Zyuganov dismissed out of hand any discussion of the much-delayed budget, saying "there is absolutely nothing to debate," and criticised President Boris Yeltsin for not sacking Mr. Chubais.

"President Boris Yeltsin made a mistake when he did not sign a decree on the resignation of the chief embezzler in the government," Interfax quoted Mr. Zyuganov as saying.

Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist speaker of the lower house state Duma, said the president "must bring the issue to an end and accept the resignation of Chubais," Interfax reported.

Mr. Seleznev said he would demand an urgent meeting of the so-called "Group of Four" — the president, premier and speakers of both houses of parliament — to discuss the situation during talks with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Mr. Yeltsin agreed to regular roundtable talks with the opposition last month as part of a compromise to defuse a censure motion launched by the Communists and their nationalist allies to protest the Chubais-inspired budget and a controversial new tax code.

Mr. Seleznev dismissed suggestions Mr. Chubais' dismissal would complicate passage of the two measures, saying: "On the contrary it would contribute to faster consideration of these documents by lawmakers."

The Duma council, which organises parliamentary business, is to decide the fate of the budget discussions in a meeting Tuesday, Mr. Seleznev added.

Communist sources said the party, which meets Tuesday, could lay a censure motion against the government to protest the Chubais scandal.

Analysts said the leftist assault sounded the death knell for Mr. Chubais, who has been a lame duck first deputy prime minister since admitting he and four others had accepted \$90,000 each for a book on Russia's privatisation programme.

Critics charged the payment was part of a disguised kickback and although Mr. Yeltsin at the weekend turned down Mr. Chubais' offer to quit, he dismissed a graft of other senior officials involved in the book deal.

Viktor Ilyukin, the

Communist chairman of the Duma's security committee, joined the chorus calling for Mr. Chubais' head, branding the man who spearheaded Russia's controversial privatisation programme as a "U.S. stooge and a cheat."

"If the president has sacked three senior officials implicated in the scandalous authors' case he must be consistent and sack Mr. Chubais, too."

Alexei Golovkov, from the pro-government Our Home is Russia party and deputy chairman of the Duma budget committee, conceded the budget discussions were in difficulty: "We can say with 90 per cent certainty that the Duma will not vote the budget and the tax code on the 19th (Wednesday)."

Andrei Piontkovsky, director of the Centre for Strategic Studies, said Mr. Yeltsin was clearly ready to dump Mr. Chubais and was now only using him as a bargaining chip to ensure the budget and tax code went through.

"Maybe that's why Yeltsin didn't dismiss him Saturday, maybe he wants from the Duma approval of the budget for the Chubais dismissal. It's a reasonable bargain."

Mr. Piontkovsky said he expected Mr. Yeltsin to name Our Home is Russia chief Alexander Shokin or central bank Governor Sergei Dubinin, as a replacement for Mr. Chubais, noting both were close to Mr. Chernomyrdin.

Mass graves of Taleban found in north Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — The graves of up to 2,000 Taleban militia apparently killed in fighting with an opposition alliance have been found in northern Afghanistan, an Afghan news service said Monday.

Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said that the commander of a northern anti-Taleban alliance, Abdul Rashid Dostum told the Taleban the graves were found near the town of Shibarghan in the opposition-held north of the country.

AIP quoted Taleban spokesman Abdul Wakil as saying Mr. Dostum had offered help by allowing the Taleban militia, which controls two thirds of the country, to airlift the bodies for burial.

The mass graves were found in the capital of Jozjan province, which is controlled by Mr. Dostum, AIP said.

The dead, buried in 20 graves, were believed to be among the 3,000 Taleban militia taken prisoners by another faction commander, General Abdul Malik, who was briefly in alliance with the Taleban in May this year.

AIP said Mr. Dostum had also offered to release 50 Taleban captives in exchange for two important prisoners being held by Taleban.

It was said the Taleban welcomed the offer and would like the help of international relief agencies in bringing the Taleban bodies from Shibarghan, the agency said.

Mr. Dostum's offer was a good gesture towards solution of the Afghan conflict through peaceful means, the AIP said. It gave no further details.

Mr. Malik and the Taleban had a brief alliance after Mr. Malik rebelled against Mr. Dostum, drove him to exile in Turkey and invited the Taleban to take control of Mazar-i-Sharif, the opposition stronghold in northern Afghanistan in May.

The alliance with the Taleban broke down and Mr. Malik turned his guns on the militia and drove them from Mazar-i-Sharif in May this year.

Mr. Dostum returned in September, regrouped and captured three northern provinces of Balkh, Jozjan and Samangan from Mr. Malik forces.

1st defence witness testifies before Rwandan war crimes court

ARUSHA. Tanzania (AFP) — The first defence witness to testify before the U.N.-sponsored war crimes court in Arusha Monday began giving evidence in the trial of a former mayor accused of genocide in Rwanda.

The witness, whose name and former position has not been disclosed, is one of three prisoners transferred to the International Criminal Tribunal in Arusha, northern Tanzania, on November 7.

The independent Radio Agatashya reported that defence lawyers aimed first of all to demonstrate to the court Jean-Paul Akayesu, formerly mayor of Taba in central Rwanda, was not responsible for genocidal killings carried out in 1994.

Instead, the mayor was said to have found himself overwhelmed by the number and anger of Hutu militia "Interahamwe," the radio station reported,

quoting a journalist from the Swiss-sponsored Hironelle Foundation who attended the hearing.

The witness will next be cross-examined by prosecutors, before two further defence witnesses give evidence.

They are the first defence witnesses to be heard by the court which at the beginning of the year began trying three Hutu defendants following the slaughter of more than half a million minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Mass killings took place between April 1994, after Rwanda's Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana was killed when his plane was shot down, and July that year, when Tutsi then rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) routed government soldiers and extremist militias blamed for the genocide.

The last of nearly 30 prosecution witnesses in the Akayesu case finished giving evidence to the tri-

bunal earlier this month. Under the rules of the tribunal, the three defence witnesses have been transferred to Arusha for a maximum of two months beginning Oct. 30.

Following their first hearing before the court, the witnesses will be sent back to Rwanda to answer charges, probably of genocide.

The court clerk's office did not name any of the witnesses. Observers said they believe they were among tens of thousands of people jammed into overcrowded Rwandan prisons on suspicion of taking part in the massacres.

Courts in Rwanda, where the whole legal system was left in tatters by the civil war, are empowered to hand down death sentences on conviction. But the ringleaders of the genocide are being tried or sought by the U.N. court, set up on the model of the War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

E. Timor university suspends activities following clashes

JAKARTA (AFP) — The Universitas Timor Timur has suspended classes following the arrest of several students after clashes with security forces, a report said Monday.

A decree by the acting head of the university, Paulus Kadjum, published by a local newspaper said activities would be suspended "until a later date," the Antara news agency reported.

It said the decision was taken because of the arrest of several students and youths at the campus Friday. At least five students and two soldiers were injured after troops entered the campus in Dili, the territory's capital, following a clash between students and plainclothes security officers Friday, East Timor military commander Colonel Slamet Sidiabutar said.

Col. Sidiabutar also said the security forces detained eight people after troops and police fired shots to disperse a crowd of students at the university.

The territory's Bishop Filipe Ximenes Belo, winner of last year's Nobel Peace Prize, has condemned the attack as "incredible brutality." He told Portuguese radio between 14 and 16 people were injured. Residents said several buildings were also damaged by rocks and bullets in the clash.

The decree called on people to have confidence the leadership of the university could handle the situation, adding the university was working with student representatives to obtain an explanation for the arrests.

"So long as the teaching and learning process at the university is suspended, the members of the university should not engage in activities which could further aggravate the situation and create new problems," the decree said.

Wednesday students held a commemoration of the 1991 massacre of East Timorese civilians by Indonesian soldiers in Dili.

The official death toll was put at 50 but other sources, including witnesses, have put it closer to 200. The university is known for its many supporters of independence for East Timor, which was invaded by Indonesia in 1975 and annexed the following year as its 27th province.

The move has never been recognised by the United Nations and pro-independence guerrillas continue to resist a large troop presence in the former Portuguese colony.

Hungarian media hail sweeping 'yes' to NATO membership

BUDAPEST (AFP) — Hungary's media, national and local, Monday unanimously hailed the victory of NATO supporters who voted "yes" in a referendum for the country's accession to the military alliance.

Front-page titles read "Sweeping majority for NATO" and "Hungarians voted for NATO", while the Kurir tabloid simply blared "NATO: YES."

Broadbeats gave two- to three-page coverage to the "extremely convincing victory."

All the papers stressed that Sunday's referendum was successful, ran smoothly and produced valid results.

All underlined that the extent of the "yes" vote, at more than 85 per cent of those who turned out, pleasantly surprised political leaders who would have been content with 60-per cent support.

"The reason for this success was that the representative majority of society is politically mature," the largest-circulation Nepszabadsag said.

"Hungary's nine-year-old democracy, whatever is being said about it, has had its baptism of fire," Nepszabadsag wrote.

But the press also pointed out differences in turnout between the country's western regions and the more

backward east. In the northwest, the turnout was above 53 per cent, while it was 39.65 per cent in the east.

In the southern Baranya county, which borders areas most hit by the Yugoslav war, the turnout was also above 51 per cent.

Budapest produced a turnout figure of 57.1 per cent and the southwestern Taszar, which for two years has hosted a U.S. military base for NATO troops in Bosnia, surpassed all at 76.89 per cent.

The national average turnout was 49.24 per cent. "The vast majority of those who went to the ballot thought that, at last, we have a place among Western democracies, and we have to accept this flattering invitation," Nepszabadsag went on.

"We have to belong where we can feel safe," the Magyar Hirlap independent broadsheet agreed. "Especially, when this safety is offered by a very powerful defence alliance which has not sent us an ultimatum but an invitation."

Armed with this "overpowering victory," Hungary's Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs is expected to present Hungary's official application for NATO membership in Brussels early this week.

After NATO invited former Warsaw Pact members Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic to join the alliance in July, the three held five rounds of detailed negotiations with NATO which ended on Nov. 11.

These talks will be reviewed first by NATO's permanent ambassadors this week, then by NATO defense ministers early December, to be followed by a ceremonial signature of accession documents by all parties concerned at a session of NATO's foreign ministers on Dec. 16.

From that moment, the new entrants will take part in NATO sessions under a special status, without voting rights.

Parliamentary ratification by the 16 NATO members states and the new entrants will start from early next year, and is expected to finish by April 4, 1999, when, on its 50th anniversary, NATO expects to take in the three as fully-fledged members.

That move will fulfil an almost decade-old dialogue between Hungary and NATO, which started in 1988 when Premier Gyula Horn, then foreign secretary, first addressed a North Atlantic Council Session in Hamburg, at a time when Hungary was still a member of the Communist Warsaw Pact.

Australia to sign landmine ban pact

CANBERRA (R) — Australia said Monday it would sign a Canadian-sponsored treaty outlawing anti-personnel landmines and destroy its own stockpile of 60,000 mines.

"The treaty... will mean that Australia will forswear the use of anti-personnel landmines and destroy its own stockpile of those landmines," Prime Minister John Howard told parliament.

"The scourge of landmines, the devastation that they wreak physically and emotionally on their helpless victims, is one of those very poignant reminders of the brutality of man to man."

"I think the decision we've taken is the right one, one that quite properly deserves the applause and support of the Australian community," he said.

More than 100 countries are expected to sign the "Ottawa treaty" in the Canadian capital next month. The treaty will ban the stockpile, export, production and use of anti-personnel landmines.

The document needs 40 countries to ratify it in order to be internationally binding.

Mr. Howard said he was disappointed that major

producers and exporters of landmines were still refusing to sign the document.

The United States has said it will only sign the treaty if it receives an exemption allowing it to keep using the weapons to defend South Korea.

But Mr. Howard also acknowledged that Australia's decision would also create some problems for its defence forces and the country would now focus on developing an alternative to their use.

"Australia has never been associated with the irresponsible use of landmines, but they have played an important (part) in plans for the defence of Australia," he said.

"Developing that alternative will now be quite necessary, indeed essential, in the overall defence structure of this country."

Aid groups and anti-mine campaigners welcomed the decision with one group saying it was a positive expansion of Australia's strong commitment to mine clearance and victim rehabilitation.

"With a ban treaty in place, we can place more focus on these vital areas to ensure that future generations are spared the

suffering and sorrow of the landmines curse," Patricia Pak Poy, from the Australian arm of the Nobel Peace prize-winning international campaign to ban landmines, said in a statement.

World Vision spokesman Jim Wackett said Australia's decision was very encouraging because it further boosted support for United Nations' action on the issue.

"That will be a very long term process indeed," Mr. Wackett said. "And the reality is that the developing world — where most present and future landmine victims live — simply cannot wait that long."

The Labour opposition also applauded the government's move.

"This is a very pleasing development and a significant contribution to the international campaign to rid the world of these terrible weapons," Opposition foreign affairs spokesman Laurie Brereton said in a statement.

Anti-personnel landmines, designed to maim, claim a new victim every 22 minutes. Most of the victims are women and children in war zones or former war zones.

Child reveals existence of Andersen poem

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — In what could almost be a fairy tale, a school-girl has revealed the existence of a previously unknown poem by master Danish storyteller Hans Christian Andersen.

The story, which has a happier ending than many of Andersen's tragic tales, unravelled in a northern Copenhagen classroom last week when the girl, Ida, turned up with an 1836 poem entitled "To Frederik's Mother" during a class on the legendary author.

"The poem certainly appears to be authentic and is interesting because it's longer than his others and carries a reference to Jesus Christ, which is rare for Andersen," said Johan de Mylius, head of the H.C. Andersen Centre in Odense, where the writer was born.

The poem, which belonged to Ida's family, the Moensted's, had been guarded secretly at home from generation to generation. It was written by Andersen in a bid to bring comfort to one of her ancestors, whose son died at the age of 13.

Mass graves of Taleban found in north Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — A mass grave of up to 200 Taleban militia members was found in fighting with opposition forces in north Afghanistan, a Pakistani news source said Monday.

The source said the mass grave was found in the north of Afghanistan, near the border with Pakistan. The source said the mass grave was found in the north of Afghanistan, near the border with Pakistan.

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Kidnapped French nationals released in Dagestan

PARIS (AFP) — Four Frenchmen kidnapped in the Russian Republic of Dagestan in August have been released and are being cared for at the French embassy in Moscow, the foreign ministry said Monday.

The four, three of them aid workers, were abducted in early August in Makhachkala, the republic's capital, which is notorious for bandit attacks. Dagestan is a southern Russian republic where more than 30 nationalities live together, and it is troubled by ethnic conflict and banditism.

The four men have been named as Andy Chevallier, the mission chief, Pascal Porcheron, a social and education specialist, Laurent Moles, a rehabilitation specialist, and Regis Greves-Vialon, a friend of the others.

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Birgit Hassert (left), sister of German hostage Dirk Hassert, Bob Wells (centre) father of British hostage Paul Wells and Julie Mangan, wife of British hostage Keith Mangan, listen to the questions of reporters during a news conference in New Delhi (Reuters photo)

Nigerian ruler to dissolve government, free dissidents

ABUJA, Nigeria (AFP) — Nigeria's military ruler General Sani Abacha Monday dissolved the government and announced he would free an undisclosed number of dissidents as the junta moves towards restoring civilian rule.

President Abacha's remarks came in a speech to the nation marking the fourth anniversary of his seizing of power in Africa's most populous country.

In his broadcast speech, Gen. Abacha said he was dissolving the cabinet immediately and appointing a new one to run the country until October of next year when he has promised to step down and surrender power to an elected civilian president.

Elections are scheduled for August. Five political parties have been allowed to register. Gen. Abacha also announced the creation of a National Judicial Council, which would amongst other duties, "regulate the conduct of judicial officers."

He said that the creation of the body was aimed at strengthening the judiciary and added the government was making efforts to enhance the independence of the judiciary.

Gen. Abacha said he was dissolving the government and appointing a new cabinet because some members of the current one wanted to "participate fully" in the election.

On the question of dissidents, Gen. Abacha said the government had reviewed the cases of all political prisoners and decided to free "those detained persons whose release would constitute no further impediment to the peace and security of our country."

He did not identify these people or say how many would be freed. "It is my hope that all those released will reintegrate into the society and make positive contributions to the national endeavours," Gen. Abacha said.

Nigeria's most prominent political prisoner is opposition leader Moshood Abiola, believed to have won 1993 elections staged and then annulled by Nigeria's then military ruler General Ibrahim Babangida.

Mr. Abiola, a millionaire businessman, was arrested in June, 1994, for declaring himself head of state and armed forces chief on the strength of the voided poll a year earlier, and he was charged with treason before a court in Abuja.

Gen. Abacha also said criticism of Nigeria over its record on democracy and human rights was an example of rich countries meddling in the affairs of poor ones.

"The growing tendency by some members of the international community to target Africa and other parts of the developing world for alleged non-compliance with their perceptions of these concepts are patently unfair and unacceptable," he said.

"Indeed, it is becoming evident that the issues of human rights and democracy are being used as a ploy to interfere in the internal affairs of states."

Without going into detail he cited the case of the Commonwealth, which has suspended Nigeria's membership

Relatives of four Westerners abducted in Kashmir lose hope

NEW DELHI, India (AFP) — Relatives of four Western tourists abducted in Kashmir more than two years ago said here Monday they were losing hope.

Bob Wells said he would, however, not give up the search for his son, Paul, a British hostage who was among six Westerners seized by Muslim separatists in July 1995 in Kashmir.

"Our hope is getting smaller on both counts," Mr. Wells said, adding there were fears that either the four were already dead or that information on their whereabouts would never surface in Kashmir.

Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Donald Hutchings and a German, Dirk Hassert, are missing since their kidnapping from the Kashmir resort of Pahalgam 28 months ago.

John Childs, another American, escaped from captivity while a Norwegian, Hans Christian Ostro, was beheaded by his abductors a month after his seizure.

Bob Wells, Mangan's wife, Julie, and Hassert's sister, Birgit, said they only sought "verifiable" information on their relatives.

"We have come to the conclusion that all these reports and sightings of our relatives are based on rumours or are fabricated. There is no firm leads in India and no one has first-hand information in Pakistan," Bob Wells said.

Bob Wells and Julie Mangan visited India and Pakistan and criss-crossed the two divided zones of Kashmir in five separate visits since the abductions. Birgit Hassert accompanied them on two occasions, the last in July.

"The entire (Kashmir) Valley has become so quiet ... Not a word on our relatives has emerged. There must be someone, somewhere out there who has the answer," said Julie Mangan, who arrived here on her sixth visit Wednesday.

The three said they would return to the Kashmir city of Jammu and then visit Srinagar later this week to search for their relatives.

They said they were desperate for leads as Muslim separatists with possible information on the hostages could be killed by Indian soldiers in the continued fighting in the northern Himalayan state.

"The frightening part is that whether any of these militants would be alive to tell us anything," Julie Mangan said of the shadowy Al Faran Muslim separatist group which

claimed responsibility for the kidnappings. "But we cannot let that happen... we need information, and very soon."

A faint hope of tracing the hostages evaporated last month when a body exhumed from a grave in Kashmir and believed to be that of one of the two Britons turned out to be a false lead, they said.

Previous reports have said the four were dead but there has been no confirmation. The hostages or their abductors have not been sighted for months by authorities in Kashmir.

Birgit Hassert said her family in Germany was frustrated. "It is like standing in a circle without any answers. When I go home my parents expect me to bring some answers but twice I returned empty-handed," Ms. Birgit said.

Yugoslavia tribunal says at a turning point

THE HAGUE (R) — The United Nations War Crimes Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, created four years ago, is at last fully operational and able to concentrate on prosecutions, outgoing President Antonio Cassese said Monday.

Addressing a group of international dignitaries, including ambassadors and justice ministers, at the swearing in of five new judges, Mr. Cassese said the tribunal had been widely acknowledged as a landmark international institution.

He said its establishment heralded the end of a time when people responsible for horrendous crimes, went unpunished and the sufferings of victims were allowed to fall into oblivion.

"Today marks a turning point which takes us into an entirely different phase. Our primary concern until now was two-fold — the establishment of the institution and its traditional machinery and securing the arrest of the presumed perpetrators of serious crimes in the former Yugoslavia," Mr. Cassese said.

"During the next four years, our tribunal will focus on the task of prosecuting the accused, while ensuring fair, and as far as possible, expeditious trials. We expect further arrests of leaders indicted by the prosecutor of our tribunal will be made," he added.

Established by a United Nations Security Council resolution in May, 1993, the Yugoslavia War Crimes Tribunal was convened for the first time in November, 1993.

The tribunal has indicted around 80 people, mainly Serbs, including Bosnia Serb former military and political leaders Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. It has 20 men in custody at its detention centre near The Hague.

Hans Corell, representing U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, told the gathering that the tribunal had developed into a fully functioning and effective body of judges, prosecutors, investigators, legal officers and registry staff.

"True, not all the persons so far indicted have been brought to justice, including some of the most important of them. However with some 20 accused awaiting trial the tribunal is now rendering justice in more cases than could realistically have been anticipated, even a year ago. It is crucial that also those other indicted be brought to justice," said Mr. Corell.

Under tribunal rules, Mr. Cassese must step down after completing his second two-year term as a judge. A panel of existing judges will elect a new president this week, a tribunal spokeswoman said.

Italy press reports centre-left triumph in local elections

ROME (AFP) — Exit polls showed that six centre-left mayors won outright in the first round of municipal elections which Italy's press saw Monday as a triumph for the government coalition.

Six other centre-left candidates were leading although they faced a second-round vote on Nov. 30, the press reports said. The actual vote count started Monday morning.

Corriere della Sera, Milan's centrist daily, called the defeat of conservative candidates "a disaster greater than the most pessimistic projections."

It expressed concern at the future of an Italy with no credible opposition. La Stampa, a centre-right daily in Turin, said the left had been expected to win, but less massively. Despite an austerity budget and fiscal pressures, voters had decided against sanctioning the left, the paper noted.

The centre-left daily La Repubblica said that mayors linked to the ruling Olive Tree coalition had "won an avalanche of votes in Rome, Naples and Venice."

L'Unita, a leftist daily, said the vote indicated the collapse of the right and the political defeat of its chief, telecommunications magnate Silvio Berlusconi.

Rome incumbent Francesco Rutelli "buried" his adversaries in a victory which demonstrated the country's need for stability and that lack of substance of his opponents, the conservative Rome daily Il Messaggero commented.

The left-wing victory in Sunday's polls shows Italians still have confidence in Prime Minister Romano Prodi's 18-month-old government despite its near-collapse last month.

The coalition was shaken when the Communists, who are not part of the alliance but support it in parliament, temporarily withdrew their support over Mr. Prodi's austerity budget.

A jubilant Prodi said Sunday: "Our citizens recognised that the problems which have remained unresolved for decades have been courageously taken in hand."

Child reveals existence of Andersen poem

Churches who tried to persuade the white-led government to stop state-sponsored abuses, and who pushed for peace between the country's warring groups "prevented the country from going down the tubes," he said.

But anti-apartheid religious groups may be guilty of "arrogance" about their role, he added. Mr. Tutu, who won the Nobel Prize in 1984 for peacefully defying apartheid's race-based policies, is credited with coining the term "rainbow nation of God" to describe South Africa's new democratic dispensation.

He added that religious groups have "a peculiar responsibility ... You are meant to accuse yourself, and expose your own sins and not the sins of another."

Truth commission officials expect religious leaders to speak about their "important role" during white-minority rule, which ended with the historic 1994 all-race elections.

The South African Council of Churches (SACC), a grouping of denominations which vocally opposed the injustices of the former government, said it did not do enough to raise awareness within the country.

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Could Israel get message?

THE FACT that Arab representatives who spoke at the opening session of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference in Doha were unanimous in denouncing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies is proof that the Arab World is not split into two groups concerning Israel. Those who did not attend the summit had already expressed their condemnation of Netanyahu's obstinacy by not going to Doha in the first place.

Although the Arab countries have different reasons for attending or boycotting the conference, they have demonstrated a united position on what needs to be done by the current Israeli government in order to put the peace process back on track. Peace-related projects, which have so far remained ink on paper mostly due to Netanyahu's recalcitrance, cannot possibly be revived while the political atmosphere between the Arabs and the Israelis is so poisoned.

All Arab states seem to agree that this MENA gathering will be less effective than its three predecessors on issues of normalisation and regional economic cooperation exactly because the political environment is much worse today than it was during the Cairo, Amman and Casablanca conferences.

Netanyahu and Co. in the Israeli government will hopefully learn a lesson from the bashing they received from the Emir of Qatar, the Jordanian delegation and even the U.S. secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, Israel's staunch supporter.

If those Israeli leaders could only understand that the security they seek for themselves and their country is contingent on attaining security for their neighbours, particularly the Palestinians, everybody's problems will be that much easier to solve. In this vein, it should not be far-fetched to assume that the attack carried out by terrorists in Luxor yesterday is in one way or another linked to the situation on the peace front and in the region generally. Witness what Ms. Albright said at the conference, when she warned Netanyahu that the disintegration of the peace process would have dire consequences on the security of the region as a whole and the interests of all parties concerned, including Israel and the U.S.

It is hoped that by the end of the MENA conference everyone will have learned a lesson. That there is potential for coexistence, for the acceptance of Israel in the region, for economic cooperation in the medium-term, and for all sorts of cooperation in the long-term, is a fact that cannot be disputed even by the extremists on the two sides.

The Israeli government should be the first to learn its basic lesson.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh said all the saber rattling by the U.S. can in no way convince the Arabs that Iraq is guilty and that Washington will punish Baghdad for briefly occupying Kuwait. The Arabs can see that Israel which has been occupying other countries' lands for the past 30 years is escaping punishment, he said. According to Masarweh, there is nothing in the war preparations that can convince the Arab people that they are intended to save the region from weapons of mass destruction stored in Iraq at a time when the whole world is witnessing Israel stockpiling all forms of such weapons. He said if the U.S. wants to launch a war it will require vast funds which are not available at the moment now that the Arab coffers are empty, and if the U.S. wants to intimidate Baghdad with its armada of warships and planes, the Iraqis are not afraid as they realise that they would not endure a more dangerous situation than that which they faced in 1991. However, the U.S. does not seem to be discouraged from the Arab countries' reaction to its threats of war against Iraq, and it seems bent on pursuing these countries to help in the war effort which, said the writer, can only serve Washington's interests and those of Israel and other allies.

Al Arah Al Yawm's Riham Al Farra said the Doha summit has succeeded in further dividing the Arab countries. Those that boycotted the meeting, like Egypt, said that they did so in order to deprive Israel of being rewarded for its present anti-peace policies and its continued occupation of Arab territories, according to the writer. She said those that took part in the meeting, like Jordan, said that they did not want to leave the arena solely for Israel to reap the benefits of possible investments and economic cooperation and trade opportunities with other nations. The result was that those Arabs who decided to boycott the meeting did not respect the views of those who preferred attending and indeed resorted to attacking them, while the other camp has been trying to defend itself through counter-campaigns, the writer added. On the whole, one can clearly sense that the Arab countries do not trust one another and that they are trying to find pretexts to justify their own decisions regarding this economic meeting. Farra said. She expressed fear that the same situation that followed the 1991 Gulf war when countries that remained neutral were accused of backing Baghdad resulted in divisions, might re-occur and even deepen the splits beyond repair.

The View from Fourth Circle

By Rami G. Khouri

Historical and hormonal imperatives in the American-Iraqi face-off

THE CHINESE were right when, during the Gulf crisis of August 1990, they stated that the confrontation between Iraq and the U.S.-led cash register coalition was really about two hegemonies — the small regional hegemon Iraq, and the big global hegemon the United States. So, it is no surprise that this month we witness another round of tensions, and another American-British military build-up in the Gulf. This has become — along with MENA economic conferences, Israeli settlement building in occupied east Jerusalem, and British-managed, Gulf-based military sales shows — virtually an annual exercise, as predictable in its regularity as it is embarrassing and wasteful in its simplistic vulgarity.

But it is not unexpected. The continued contemporary political distortions, socio-economic disparities, and historical injustices that define our region make it fully inevitable that the indigenous Arab-Islamic societies of the Middle East will regularly display rebellion and defiance in the face of predatory Anglo-Saxon and Israeli militarism. It is fascinating, but telling, that the United States and the United Kingdom should be the two states that repeatedly flex their muscles, wag their tongues, and test their new weapons against Iraq. For these two states — driven by an irresistible, uncontrollable combination of hormonal and historical imperative — are the torch-bearers of Western penetration and exploitation of our region, and the consecutive midwife and guardian of the state of Israel.

Israel, in fact, is the key link to understanding the Arab perspective on the chain of historical and contemporary events that converge in this situation, as they did during the 1990 Gulf crisis. Israel and oil are the two principal constants that have defined the historical and political relationships among the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel and the Arab World. Israel and oil have generated intense emotions in this region among all concerned — and for the past seven years these have fed the recurring U.S.-U.K.-Iraqi-Arab face-offs, which now also reflect wider global resistance to the peculiar combination of Anglo-Saxon imperial arrogance and historical ignorance that is now on display.

The situation must be assessed and addressed on two levels, the particular and the general. The particular issue is the requirement of Iraqi compliance with existing U.N. Security Council sanctions and weapons monitoring resolutions. It has now been expanded to include Iraq's charge that the sanctions have become unreasonably punitive, retributive and bestial in their terrible impact on

the civilian population, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqis, especially children, due to lack of sufficient medicine and food. This should be a relatively straightforward technical issue to resolve — given the Iraqi government's submission to the weapons inspection system.

It is complicated, however, by more general Iraqi, Middle Eastern and international complaints about the unfair and disproportionate implementation of the U.N.-mandated sanctions regime. Two main complaints require a serious bearing by the international community: 1) that the United States has transformed the U.N. resolutions into a unilateral American vendetta that is determined to maintain the sanctions until Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is out of power, which was not part of the original U.N. resolutions, and 2) that unilateral American vengeance in implementing the U.N. sanctions resolutions against Iraq, parroted by British acquiescence, is not matched by equal diligence in implementing other equally valid U.N. resolutions that require Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon and to end its unilateral colonisation and Judaisation of Palestinian and Syrian lands occupied in 1967, including Arab East Jerusalem.

These two complaints are very widely supported throughout the Middle East and in many other parts of the world. They demand, very simply, that both principal hegemonies be tamed — that Iraq comply fully with U.N. resolutions and never again threaten its neighbours; and that the United States also comply fully with the letter and spirit of all U.N. resolutions, and not single-handedly rewrite resolutions or pick and choose those resolutions which it finds politically convenient to enforce.

Unilateral American and British military action against Iraq is opposed today by most of the world — I say "most" since we haven't heard from Micronesia yet — because the last seven years of sustained Anglo-American diplomatic and military exuberance seem not to have achieved their stated aims. The U.S.-British strategy of punitive militarism, retributive sanctions, and hormonal overload is not only ineffective — it has now also become counter-productive. The Anglo-American approach to Iraq has only made the Iraqi leadership even more defiant, spilled over to cause economic and political problems in neighbouring lands, maintained the Gulf and Middle East region's state of chronic instability, heightened many Arab leaders' vulnerability to the chronic anger and humiliation of their people, further degraded the international credibility of the United Nations (which

is now seen by many as a part-time law enforcement agency of the U.S. State Department), and increased international irritation at the globally hegemonic, Lone Ranger-style of American foreign policy. And, if the U.S. and the U.K. are truthful in claiming that Iraq continues to hide weapons of mass destruction capabilities, the policy has also failed embarrassingly in its principal aim of eliminating those weapons development capabilities. To perpetuate this same flawed policy with more of the same seems illogical, naive, and truly imbecilic.

To judge by recent Arab policy decisions, however, there is little or nothing that the Arab states can do in the short term in the face of these frustrations and complaints, due to the combination of Arab weakness and dependence, and American strength and determination. This latest confrontation hopefully will end in a diplomatic solution that avoids more violence and maintains the rule of international law; but there is a good chance that it will end only after massive American-British attacks against Iraq that would probably aim to assassinate the Iraqi president and leadership — and, as such, would meet the twin tests of Anglo-American national machismo (hormonal self-assertion) and the projection of military power and national will (historical imperial self-assertion).

The growing instability, poverty, and militarisation of the entire Middle East region, including the Gulf oil states, are cruel and ironic testament to the failure of most policies adopted by most Arab states, western powers, and Israel during and since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. This latest episode should prompt all concerned to assess the realities of the recent past with more logic flowing from their minds, and less emotionalism and jingoism flowing from their loins. The Iraqi, Israeli and American-British leaderships all display a vulgar tendency to engage in predatory hegemonic militarism and colonialism that are coupled with diplomatic rhetoric that is juvenile in its morality, tortured in its legality, and psychotic in its inconsistency. The unacceptable and untenable legacy of the policies of all these sovereign culprits has brought us to the brink of yet another tragic confrontation, whose consequences probably will only intensify, rather than resolve, the underlying problems and tensions of the Middle East. The only thing more depressing than having to watch this process unfold before our eyes is the knowledge that we will probably watch it occur many times again in the years to come.

The rebirth of the left

Latin American voters make a sudden shift after keeping right in power for many years

By Jorge G. Castaneda

THE MOST significant event of late October? For most of the world, the answer is obvious: the global market collapse and revival. In Latin America, though, the big story was political, not economic. A dramatic power shift in Argentina — a left-of-centre coalition blew away the ruling Peronists in legislative elections — may well signal a new era in Latin American politics. That's a change the rest of the world should note.

The Argentine results mark the third time this year that anti-establishment, anti-incumbent candidates or parties in the region have taken power from the neoliberal right. For the past decade or more, the right, buttressed by the international financial community and by many voters' perfectly rational fears of a return to economic chaos or civil war, had won election after election. The left often seemed poised to win, but never did; the right was expected to lose, but always won. The change began in March in El Salvador, where FMLN guerrillas-cum-campaigners won the mayor's race in the nation's capital and in most of the other cities — and fought the right-wing Arena party to a draw in parliament. In July, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas won the first election ever for mayor of Mexico City, and his party, the PRD, ran a strong second to the ruling PRI in national legislative elections. And now the Frepaso-UCR (the Spanish acronym for the Radical Party) coalition has created a serious,

viable Argentine left for the first time in more than half a century. Its next test will come in the 1999 presidential election, for which it now has four first-rate pretenders: Frepaso leaders Graciela Fernández Meijide and Carlos (Chacho) Alvarez, and Radicals Fernando de la Rúa and Rodolfo Terragno.

So, time to kiss off neoliberalism? Not exactly. It's no surprise that, as left-of-centre aspirants get closer to winning office, they drift to the middle. Or one can view the process the opposite way: the more they distance themselves from the left and shift towards the centre, the closer they get to power. But either way, it is true that in Mexico, El Salvador and Argentina (and maybe Paraguay, where a left-wing coalition could win next May's presidential vote), the left is much less anti-neoliberal than it was, or than it was perceived as being. Two other reasons neoliberalism remains strong: the presidency wasn't at stake in any of this year's elections, and the practical changes and adjustments free-market reforms require have yet to be fully thought out. No radical policy departures are on the way.

The real change lies in the electorate. Until this year, with rare exceptions, voters throughout Latin America gave the "Washington consensus" — as the neoliberal package is known — the benefit of the doubt. They repeatedly voted in advocates of "consensus" policies — trade liberalisation, privatisations, foreign investment — or reelected candidates who initially

opposed radical free-market approaches but subsequently implemented them. Fear of inflationary chaos, a sense that leftist ideas ran against the tide of history, a yearning for modernity and imported goods — all contributed to these victories; so did the left's disarray, division and disconnection from reality. Now voters seem to be changing their minds.

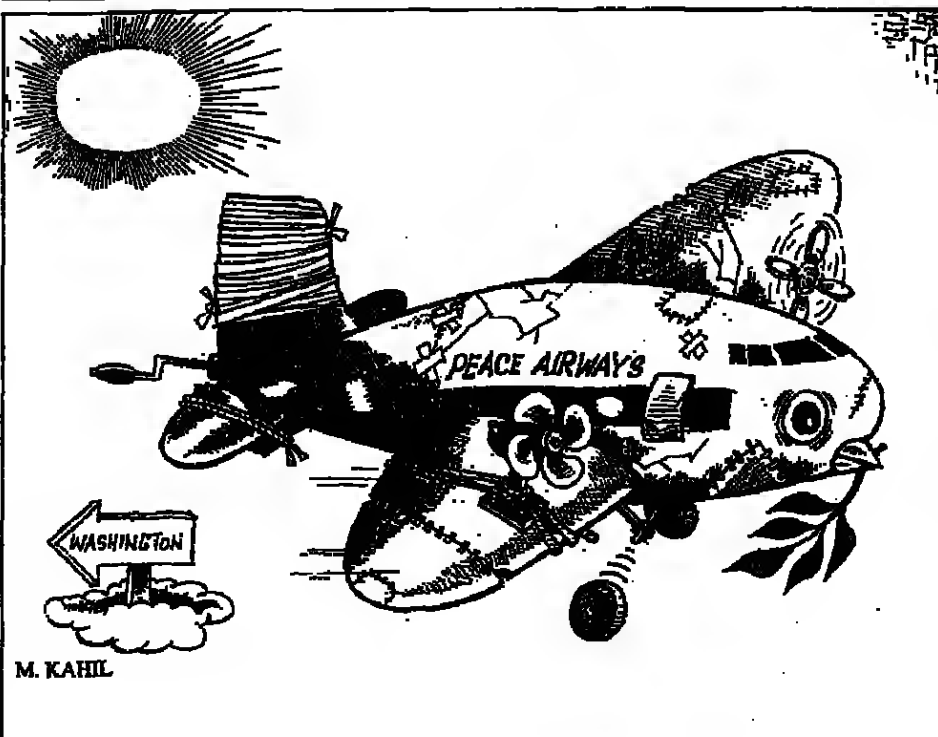
There are at least two explanations for the shift. First, the left has learned its lesson, and resignedly has accepted the market, for better or for worse. It has also understood, for example, that it must maintain monetary stability. Second, voters are more sensitive to the fact that the right-wing neoliberal model has largely failed to deliver the goods. Unemployment, corruption, rising inequality and, with the exception of Chile, low growth rates: the free-market record in Latin America is far less impressive than its promises and expectations.

Lastly, the politics of unity have helped the opposition, as the left and centre join together to isolate the right and generate momentum. In Argentina, after failing to coalesce until the summer, the UCR and Frepaso put their differences behind them: they worked out a deal for this election, and a primary system to choose a presidential candidate for 1999. The prospects for the rest of the regional left will in great part depend on whether progressive groups can attract centrist support and forge new alliances. Where they already exist, as in Chile, they will have to be strengthened and consolidated. Where they do not, as in

Mexico and Brazil, the test will be to achieve them. In Brazil, the Workers' Party (PT) will have to entice the small and pulverised groups to its left and right into an alliance that by its own sheer size it should lead, but in which, given political realities, it should probably not play a leading role. This should conceivably go as far as supporting a candidate from another party for the presidency next year — something that Luiz Inácio (Lula) da Silva's PT is very reluctant to do. In Mexico, Cárdenas's PRD will have to convince itself of the merits of an alliance with PAN centrists in the hope that they can take over the party and drag it into a coalition with the left. Matters are moving in this direction in Mexico's Congress, but the presidential election in the year 2000 is the big enchilada, and a single opposition candidacy appears as unlikely as the PRI's losing to a divided opposition.

Still, nothing succeeds like success, and if there is a lesson to be learned from the Argentine elections, it is that voters reward unity and punish division. And also that it is far better to win elections than to lose them, something that the Latin American left had perhaps forgotten but that this year, finally, it has begun to remember.

Castaneda and Harvard Law professor Roberto Mangabeira have assembled a group of Latin American left and centre leaders, including those mentioned in this column. Their next meeting will be in Buenos Aires at the end of November. This article is reprinted from Newsweek.



LETTERS

Middle of the road solution

To the Editor:

YOUR PAPER via the Internet is a refreshing window on the political landscape of the region. However, you did not elucidate the middle of the road solution, instead you left it, it seems, to others to design.

The U.S. position on the embargo on Iraq is set forth in an executive order signed by President George Bush during August 90 and inherited by President Bill Clinton. As such the embargo is the law of the land. President Clinton cannot change it even if he wishes to, which is not the case, due to powerful U.S. domestic factors. President Clinton did say that the embargo will remain till the end of time!

If the embargo were to be eased or lifted,

ed, it is likely to be on a regional basis especially the humanitarian portion.

Jordan has always done what it could, given its unique geopolitical situation.

As you well know this latest confrontation between Iraq and the U.S. and Britain spans the period of 1945 to date, primarily related to regional and oil issues. Iraq's oil reserves estimated at \$420 billion barrels with an estimated market value of 15 trillion dollars, in my view, is the ultimate prize. The outcome of the forthcoming match will impact on the region for a long time.

Fuad K. Taima
 McLean, Virginia
 USA

Archaeology in the field: 80 people embark on 'active visit' to Pella

By Richard Tanner

ONE FINE day last weekend found me leading a group of 80 people (parents, teachers and students) into the Jordan Valley, with Pella as our destination. On arrival, checking the forest of hands admitting it was their first visit, it seemed hard to believe so few people had visited this beautiful and significant place before.

After an introduction about the rift valley and its early settlement — everyone was busily completing their worksheets — I explained that this was an active visit; I was not going to tell them much, but they were going to have to find out the population of Pella in 600 A.D. The party split into 3 groups, each with an experienced 'observer' (not leader), and each received a set of instructions.

The Water Waders were to measure the spring, calculate its flow and estimate the maximum population. The Church Checkers visited the three churches, calculated their total capacity and estimated the population they would serve. The Town Trekkers walked the tell, estimated how many it would house, then added any possible suburbs.

Following snacks at the resthouse terrace overlooking the site, speakers from each group explained to the party what they'd done and what their results were: 2,500, 4,500 and 25,000. All waited with bated breath for the "right" answer, taken from Rami Khouri's "Antiquities of the Jordan Rift Valley" — "Pella... may have reached 25-30,000 people" (page 25). Two of the groups couldn't believe their accuracy, whilst the third decided that perhaps the Byzantines weren't very religious.

The purpose of the exercise was to have fun, and we



The remains one of four Byzantine churches found in Pella (top). Experienced observer Mike Relf directs operations (left), and students try to determine how fast a stream flows (right) (photos taken on a Casio QV10 digital camera)

did just that. It was also to accept a challenge, work as a group to deal with that and to come up with an answer. In reaching that answer, group members raised issues important to social archaeology: Was the spring always there, did it change by season, how much water did the average Byzantine use, was water used to irrigate crops, how did it reach houses, baths and so on (Water Waders); did people stand in church and outside, how often were services held, who attended church, were there other religions then (Church Checkers); why were there no house remains, how big were houses and how crowded, how wide were the streets and market areas, were there central slums and rich suburbs, did residents have slaves (Town Trekkers). Answering such questions requires research, bread and butter for the social archaeologist trying to understand city life in Byzantine times.

We took along a digital camera. The Casio QV10 can take up to 96 pictures, in daylight or shade, with macro or zoom, without using film. Though the products are not of photographic quality (yet), the digital camera is quick, flexible and cheap to use (no film). Pictures can be viewed directly or easily downloaded onto computers to edit and combine, print out and show on a TV monitor — invaluable assets for visual learning. Some are included here, downloaded straight onto a Jordan Times computer to show what we did. Others are on display at the Friends of Archaeology Centre near Fourth Circle

The writer, an ex-principal of a British school, is now teaching at Amman Baccalaureate School. He contributed the above article to the Jordan Times.

As privatisation looms, China firms search for solutions

By Seth Faison

SHANGHAI — Lu Yaqin cheerfully admits that, for a chairwoman of the board, she does not know much about business.

Miss Lu's position, running a company newly freed from government ownership, right in the heart of China's largest city, might seem an enviable spot for finding opportunity in the world's fastest-growing economy.

But Miss Lu, like so many managers in China who came of age under central planning, has more experience following Communist Party instructions than making business decisions. At her cramped, back-alley factory, where 159 workers make industrial sewing machines, she seems a bit perplexed in her search for new sources of income.

"The leadership is encouraging us to explore new solutions," said Miss Lu, 49, whose company has retained its Communist-era name, Shanghai No. 2 Textile Machinery Factory. "I thought maybe we should start a laundry delivery service. What do you think?"

The vast majority of China's 300,000 state-run enterprises are small, inefficient and now, under pressure to reform, grasping at almost anything for a way to stay alive. The business climate has become treacherously unstable, and many managers like Miss Lu are party operatives with little experience or understanding of business.

At the Communist Party congress in Beijing in September, the party approved a plan to shift the ownership of all but 3,000 or so enterprises away from the state, through mergers, public sale of shares or transferring control to management and workers.

The state press has hailed the move as a crucial step forward in China's economic reform.

The idea, in essence, is to shed the state's burden of money-losing businesses. While dismantling the last pillar of China's communist economy, leaders say they must stop paying huge subsidies to lagging enterprises that cannot compete with newer, private companies that are fuelling China's swift economic growth.

The reality, as seen at a factory like Miss Lu's, is a mish-mash of good intentions, murky finances, political deal-making and "Chinese characteristics," as politicians here call phenomena they cannot easily explain. The outcome, though still up in the air, appears likely to be a messy mixture of state and private control.

Chinese officials hope that over the long run, releasing state companies into the free market will force a natural selection of viable businesses.

"We must have a system where the strong survive and the weak fail," said Wang Zhongyu, minister of the state Economic and Trade Commission, during the party congress.

The grave risk is that unrest will erupt among workers, since more than 100 million jobs are at stake in the state-owned businesses that will be up for sale. Workers at many companies are suddenly finding themselves obliged to buy shares if they want to keep their jobs, and once government support disappears they could be left with nothing if their factories collapse.

An even greater concern, dramatised in small but ominous worker protests across the country in recent months, is the danger of corrupt factory managers who fail to pay workers and, taking advantage of the disorder as ownership is shifting, abscond with a company's assets.

For any enterprise, especially one in transition, choosing a shareholding system means giving shareholders the right to select a company's directors.

The reality may not be so simple. In Miss Lu's factory,



New suspension bridge spans across the Shanghai bay. Privatisation has brought with it a boom in the skyscraper construction business of this large coastal city (photo by J. Hamarneh)

for instance, the same four leaders who ran the factory before it shifted from state ownership to a shareholding system last year were "elected" again at a first meeting of shareholders, with a new fifth member added.

"It was unanimous," Miss Lu said proudly. "It feels much better to be chosen by everyone than appointed by one or two people up above."

Miss Lu has been the factory's Communist Party secretary since 1973, when fanatical leftists were in charge and the main requirement for the job, as Miss Lu remembers it, was organising and chanting political slogans of the Cultural Revolution. She became the factory's general

manager in 1989.

Mirroring the kind of elections held at various levels of the Chinese government, voting at enterprises like Miss Lu's may sometimes offer a few genuine choices, but only within parameters that the relevant authorities have set. Miss Lu said as much when she described the process at her factory.

A few months before the directors were chosen, Miss Lu said she held staff meetings to talk about switching to a shareholding system. The workers were each asked to put up \$500, about triple the average monthly salary, for a stake in the company.

Such a price is affordable, in part, because the country's savings rate is so high. Inexpensive housing still allows a typical urban worker to bank 40 per cent of a salary, and in addition to China's cultural tradition of thrift, there are few investment choices better than a savings account.

"I thought because it's a good deal," said a 32-year-old machinist at the factory, keeping an eye on Miss Lu. "Everyone had a strong desire for the new system." Miss Lu said. "There were no objections. Everyone's thinking was in the line with the leadership."

The New York Times

Fariz presents Jordan's structural reform experience at Doha forum

DOHA (J.T.) — Top economists in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region argued Monday that there is no blueprint for sustainable economic growth but underlined the need of the private and public sectors to perform their roles properly during structural reform stages to encourage investment opportunities.

At the thematic session: Achieving Economic Growth with Price Stability: Challenges and Policy Issues, five-member panelists acknowledged challenges that emerging economies in the global market face but stressed that there were no "secret recipe" that could be followed.

Central Bank of Jordan Governor Ziad Fariz presented Jordan's experience in structural reform and the steps it had taken to lower inflation rates.

"The simple message

from Jordan is that growth, price stability and an improvement in the external position can materialise together," according to Dr. Fariz. "We did it through the classical monetary policy mix while using the exchange rate as a nominal anchor."

Dr. Fariz stressed the need to focus on the adoption of sound and prudent fiscal and monetary policies with greater emphasis on the fiscal side to further relieve monetary policy from the burden of adjustment.

But Jacob Frenkel, governor of the Central Bank of Israel, insisted there was no fixed recipe for sound structural reform. He called on MENA countries to develop their own resources "instead of talking to the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and other organisations to mobilise our resources."

He said the region is in

dire need of cooperation or some mix between the private and public sectors.

According to Dr. Frenkel, people in the region still lack confidence in the public sector and called on entrepreneurs to give a boost to the region's economies.

From the Japanese point of view, some countries in the MENA region still suffer from "legacies of the past" that obstruct their economic performance. Yoshiaki Hatanaka, executive chief economist at the Institute for International Economic Studies, said governments' control of finances and management should be highly improved.

"We need clear signals that MENA countries are following fiscal policies that allow secure business environment," he insisted. Nearly all participants stressed that countries should not expect divi-

dends to be achieved overnight.

"Nobody can feel benefits immediately," Dr. Frenkel said. "Structural reforms bear fruit after a long delay."

According to Mohammad Al Erian, IMF deputy director for the Middle East, there should be more opening up among countries in the region to help "minimise the pain" and boost trade opportunities.

He gave the example of New Zealand as a country that almost lost hope in the dividends of structural reforms before it achieved real prosperity.

Abdullah Al Attiyeh, governor of the Central Bank of Qatar said: "to prevent the consequences of financial instability in a relatively integrated world financial economy... prudent macroeconomic and structural policies are required."

Hafez: Reforms negatively affected employment rate

AMMAN (Petra) — The economic restructuring programme which Jordan has been applying over the past years succeeded in reducing the Kingdom's volume of debts to foreign countries but left negative effects on the unemployment rate which now stands at 14 per cent of the country's workforce, Finance Minister Suleiman Hafez said Monday.

Delivering a lecture at an Amman Rotary Club meeting held at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel, Mr. Hafez blamed the original problem of unemployment on the policies of the successive governments which allowed non-Jordanian workers to assume jobs that could have been filled by Jordanian job seekers.

"These policies have negatively affected the national economy," he stressed. However, the minister said the economic restructuring programme has reduced the indebtedness, increased the national income, cut the margin of deficit in the fiscal budget and curbed inflation rates to the lowest level ever.

In his lecture, which was attended by several former Cabinet ministers, Mr. Hafez said in order to continue the drive to reduce the deficit in the state's budget and increase investments, new transparent laws must be enacted and the private sector should be given a greater margin to manoeuvre safely.

He said that the government should not be overburdened with tasks at a time when it is trying to build up a strong foreign currency reserve, reschedule debts to

foreign banks and nations and stabilise the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar.

Several countries have favourably responded to Jordan's call for rescheduling its \$860 million debts as a result of the negotiations with the Paris Club and Jordan's contacts with individual creditor nations, he noted.

Referring to investments, the minister noted that the government exempted national savings and capital from taxes but at the same time it reexamined the situation concerning subsidies of food supplies as well as electricity and water charges.

After the Gulf war, the minister pointed out, Arab countries financial assistance to Jordan ceased prompting the government to embark on the economic restructuring programme which, he said, has helped the country to secure revenues to the treasury covering 60 per cent of the recurrent expenditure.

"This by itself is a great achievement for the Jordanian people and government," he emphasised.

As to the deficit in the budget, he said it dropped to 6.4 per cent but the government hopes to decrease the rate to 2.5 per cent by the end of 1998 and to boost the rate of investments to reach 33 per cent compared to the gross domestic product.

He said that inflation now runs at three per cent while national economic growth, which now stands at 5.3 per cent, is expected to rise to six per cent next year.

Palestinian economy needs help — World Bank

DOHA (R) — The World Bank Monday called for an international effort to bolster the Palestinian economy, which has been on the decline since the 1993 peace accords with Israel.

"We should all do something about it," Kemal Dervis, a World Bank vice-president, told the annual Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference.

He said that while MENA regional economies had improved over the past two years, recording average annual growth of 4.5 per cent

compared to 1.5 per cent over the previous decade, the Palestinian economy was "a dark spot" with per capita income dropping by 30 per cent since 1993.

"Think of the social problems you (developed states) would have in your countries" if a similar drop were recorded, Mr. Dervis added.

The U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corp (OPIC) later Monday signed a protocol with the U.S.-based Capital Investment Management Corporation which plans to invest up to \$100 million in

the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan.

OPIC, a U.S. government agency, insures U.S. companies' investments abroad from risks including takeover of their assets by foreign governments. Most Arab speakers at the conference have criticised Israel's government. Some Western officials said setbacks in the peace process should not hold regional economic development hostage.

Mr. Dervis said the region was far from reaching a comprehensive peace which, if

achieved, could spell economic growth of seven to nine per cent a year early in the next century.

Stanley Fischer, first deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund, also expressed concern over the Palestinian economy.

It had been "hit hard by the reversals in the peace process and measures taken by Israel. This has disrupted investment and growth, and added to unemployment and economic deprivation," he said at the three-day conference which opened Sunday.

Oil revenues of OPEC countries reached \$160 billion in 1996

NICOSIA (AFP) — Oil revenues for OPEC's 11 member countries reached \$160.62 billion in 1996, an increase of 21.5 per cent over 1995, an industry trade journal reported Monday.

The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), published in Nicosia, said the rise in revenue accompanies a "modest increase" in production.

The journal said oil production by the countries of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) averaged 24.77 million barrels per day (bpd) in 1996, compared with 24.6 million

bpd the previous year, according to OPEC statistics.

MEES said that crude oil production increases were registered notably by Saudi Arabia (78,900 bpd), Algeria (53,200 bpd), Nigeria (20,500 bpd), the United Arab Emirates (13,300 bpd), Iraq (3,500 bpd), Qatar (3,300 bpd), Venezuela (2,500 bpd), and Iran (1,000 bpd).

Drops in oil production were registered by Libya (5,000 bpd), Indonesia (1,700 bpd), and Kuwait (1,000 bpd). The oil journal reported that the world's proven crude oil reserves for 1996 totaled

1.047 trillion barrels, of which 76.6 per cent (801.9 billion) belonged to the OPEC countries.

The total proven crude oil reserves worldwide were up 1.6 per cent in 1996 compared to 1.030 trillion in 1995.

For OPEC countries, proven reserves were up 2.1 per cent in 1996 compared to 785.2 billion in 1995.

The country with the most oil reserves is Saudi Arabia, with 261.4 billion barrels, followed by Iraq (112 billion), the United Arab Emirates (97.8 billion), Kuwait (96.5 billion) and Iran (92.6 billion).

ANNOUNCEMENT EXTENSION OF (TRC CALL 1997-1) The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it has EXTENDED the purchasing of Call for Tenders for two national public access mobile radio service (TRUNKING) licences until December 17, 1997. Following consultation with the industry, the TRC issued the Call for Tenders dated October 18, 1997 (TRC Call 1997-1), which sets out the process that the TRC will follow in awarding the new licence. The process consists of two phases. During the first phase, a special tender evaluation committee will review the technical aspects of the submissions from all applicants. Those applicants who successfully pass this phase will participate in the second phase, in which their sealed financial proposals will be opened at a meeting of all qualifying applicants.

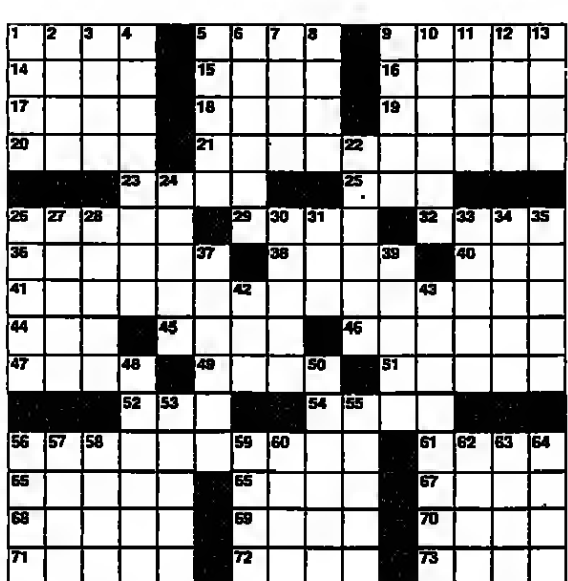
Parties interested in applying for the public access mobile radio service (TRUNKING) licence may obtain a copy of the Call for Tenders from the TRC upon payment of JD2,500. The deadline for the submission of applications is January 25, 1998.

For further information, contact:

The Office of the Director General
Telecommunications Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 850967, Amman 11185, Jordan
Telephone (962) 6-862020 - Fax (962) 6-863641

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Fellow
5 Raced
9 Collar extension
14 Opinion survey
15 Wings
16 "This — all..."
17 Absent
18 Microbe
19 Seized
20 Meager
21 Instructs
23 Oven for drying
25 Peer Gynt's mother
26 Voiced
29 Belgian river
32 Kind of party
38 Mongol
38 Napoleon's exile island
40 Oklahoma city
41 Having little weight
44 Literary collection
45 Blissful place
46 Downcast
47 Transmit
49 "— grand night for singing"
51 Playwright
52 Ethiopian title
54 Repair
56 Very enjoyable
61 Luxuriant
65 More frosty
66 Indonesian island
67 Huron's neighbor
68 Partake
69 God of war
70 Demolish
71 Gymnast's item
72 Memory
73 Toboggan



by Dorothy B. Martin

Puzzle solved:

AMIS APPE BRIT
TANT ALDOF AUTO
OMAR YIEWFINDER
PENITENT ADDERS
PIARE ACEY
TAMPA AGES CPD
TONI GALE TBANS
ARDN EWING URIS
RIDER ACTE TDDO
TIE ELKE TITILE
ALRE WAGE
ANADEM ANBORDAY
WINDTUNNEL CANA
ENDL RITSE UNAL
DIAINE SPAT PETE

- DOWN
1 Income tax
2 Ullate
3 Kirghiz mountain range
4 — Rock
5 Wise men
6 Abundance

- 50 Charm worn to ward off evil
53 Give consent
55 "Fur —"
57 — out (disperse)
57 Reverberate
58 Ananias
59 Ski lift
60 Gambling game
62 Russian range
63 Magnitude
64 Pay attention to

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Someone is ordering you around. It just rubs you the wrong way, and you want to say something back. That is not a good idea. Let it run like water off a duck's back and you'll be more successful. Lay low. Play it cool. Watch what's going on. And don't start any fights.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You and your sweetheart could learn something together that will benefit you both. If you're considering a project that involves a partner, get started on it now. Make travel plans now too, even if you can't go today. All those things will go well, so relax.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Take an overtime assignment for extra money. If you're getting ready to decorate for the holidays, that few hours in exchange for a few more dollars will be a good trade. Meanwhile, lend an ear to a friend with a sad story. Don't lend anything else, however.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You'll have a hassle this morning with an authority figure, but nothing you can't handle. By evening, everything will turn out splendidly. Try more new things than usual, especially in romance. Be bold. If you want a forever commitment, go ahead and make one.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) If you're finding another's sorrows annoying, maybe you're reminded of an unsettled issue in your own past. Learn a lesson from the other person's experience. This makes the whole situation more educational. Might as well look at it like that. Same price.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have more energy than usual, so a tough job looks simple. So what are you waiting for? You've had lots of good ideas over the past few weeks. Some of them could even be money-makers. Gather a group for a meeting around lunchtime and make it happen.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are a good negotiator. You can get both sides working together, because you understand so many points of view. Remember that, if someone is acting strange. Consider his or her motivation, and what the payoff might be. That will help you understand the game plan.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You have allies in a distant place who will help you achieve your goals. You know who these people are, and you know what they can do. Don't wait any longer. If you don't take advantage of the opportunity now, it may not come again for quite some time. Move on the idea right now.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You could make an advancement in your career today. A new skill, plus old experience, will come in handy. You might find the job of your dreams through the grapevine. Knowing somebody who knows somebody could be an advantage. Don't be too proud to ask.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You're learning a lot, and it shows. You're making a good impression. One person in particular really looks up to you. You like that. While you disagree on some subjects, you generally balance each other out. This is a relationship worth nurturing.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You'll have to work hard to keep up with a demanding person's requests. If you do your best, you'll make a good impression. They'll look at you as an expert. And you may get enough money to put some into your savings. This is a goal worth going for. Stop complaining.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is another beautiful day for you. You're lucky in love and travel. That should be a lot of fun. There is a problem about having to go to work, but that shouldn't be difficult to get around. If you come up with a good excuse, you might get the day off. It's certainly worth a try.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

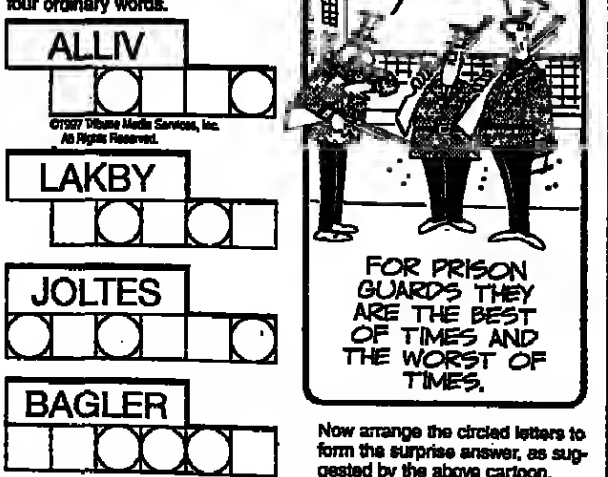
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"My boss had to change his motto. 'Dream Big' kept putting us to sleep."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.
Answer here: (Answers tomorrow)
Yesterday's Jumbles: MOSSY, COVEY, SAFARI BABIED
Answer: What he did when his toupee blew away — "COMBED" THE AREA

U.S., Mexico and Jamaica bound for World Cup

FOXBORO (AFP) — The United States, Mexico and Jamaica emerged as the qualifiers from the CONCACAF Zone for next year's World Cup finals at the weekend when the United States scored a 4-2 win over El Salvador, Jamaica and Mexico shared a 0-0 draw in Kingston, and Costa Rica beat Canada 3-1 in San Jose.

El Salvador's slender hopes were immediately dented when Brian McBride scored two goals for the Americans in a six-minute blitz midway through the first-half. And it appeared to be all over when Chris Henderson made it 3-0 four minutes after the break.

But the Salvadorans battled back. Nildelson de Melo scored on the hour and Raul Diaz Arce slotted home a penalty three minutes later.

Preki Radosavljevic clinched the United States victory with a



Jamaicans celebrate after their national soccer team draw with Mexico during their World Cup qualifying match in Kingston. Jamaica advanced for the first time to World Cup finals with the help of the United States defeating El Salvador earlier in the day (Reuters photo)

fourth goal for the home side eight minutes from time.

It was the best American performance since they beat Jamaica 5-1 in 1988.

In other CONCACAF group matches Jamaica drew 0-0 with group leaders Mexico in Kingston while Canada finished bottom of the table and with ten men when they crashed at Costa Rica.

Costa Rica had gone 2-0 clear thanks to goals from Richard Smith (8) and Farben Ilama (16) but Canada pulled one back when Carl Fletcher scored six minutes into the second-half.

Fletcher, however, was then shown the red card by the Brazilian referee Antonio Pereira da Silva and Luis Marin made it 3-1 with a last minute goal for the home side.

Australians prepare in Dubai for Iran game

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian manager Terry Venables will quarantine his Australian players away from Tehran to enable a smooth preparation for their final World Cup football qualifier against Iran.

Twenty six Socceroos on three continents began Monday the dash to their base camp in the gulf city of Dubai after learning their final qualifying foe would be Iran, who lost 3-2 in extra time to Japan in Malaysia.

The winner of the two legs over the next two Saturdays will secure the 32nd and last place in the World Cup finals in France next June, something Australia has not achieved since its only appearance in Germany in 1974.

"Logistically, I couldn't think of a worse place in the world to get to than Tehran at such short notice," said Soccer Australia chairman David Hill before the Australian-based players' departure here Monday.

"Soccer Australia staff have been working non-stop to make sure everyone is in Dubai within the next 24 hours and Terry Venables will make a final decision on whether to fly to Tehran on Friday or the morning of the game."

The Australians had been hoping for an Iran victory over the Japanese in the playoff match because they would have much preferred to face Japan.

Fanatical home support also makes Tehran an intimidating venue for visitors, as the Socceroos discovered in 1973 and 1977 when they lost World Cup qualifying matches there.

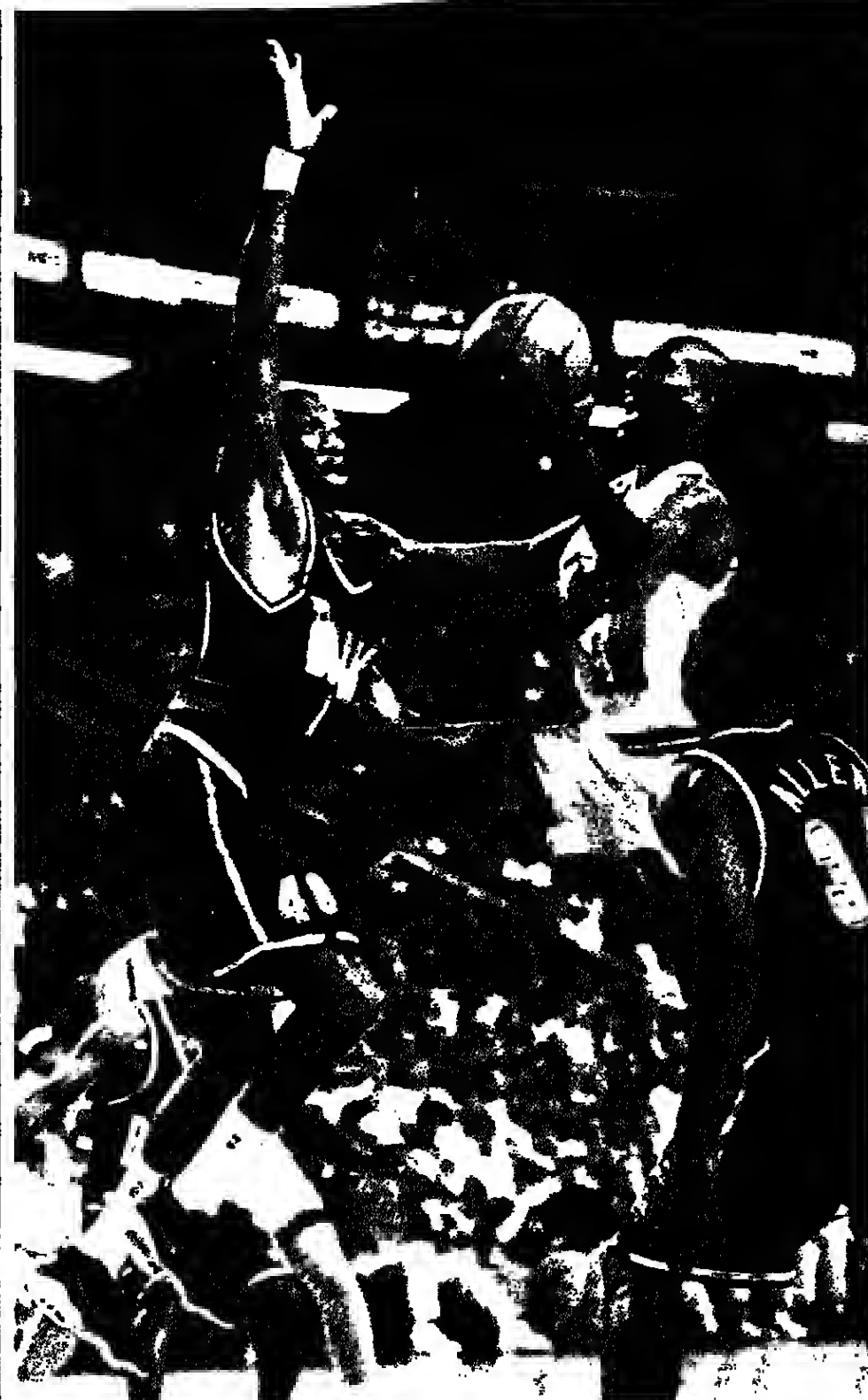
Complicating the situation are the rising tensions in neighbouring Iraq with Britain and the United States considering a military strike against Iraq.

"We have been told a possible outbreak of fighting could occur in the future," Hill said. "We are in daily contact with the (Australia's) Department of Foreign Affairs and we will not put our players or officials at any risk whatsoever."

The world body FIFA also deals with these situations on a regular basis and the match will not proceed if there is any danger involved.

Hill said the Socceroos faced tremendous logistic problems in getting to Tehran and back to Melbourne for the return leg there on November 29 and efforts were being made to hire a charter flight out of Iran after the match. The first flight out of Tehran after the match is on Sunday to Dubai which would get the Australian party in a jetlagged condition to Melbourne on Tuesday week.

European-based Socceroos, including Croatian trio Mark Viduka, Steve Horvat and Josip Skoko, Ned Zelic from France, Paul Okon from Italy and Aurelio Vidmar from Spain, gathered in London to join British-based players including Leeds United teenager Harry Kewell, goalkeeper Mark Bosnich, Glasgow Rangers defenders Craig Moore and Tony Vidmar, Southampton's Robbie Slater and West Ham's Stan Lazaridis.



Seattle Sonic Gary Payton (center) drives hard to the hoop against Milwaukee's Ervin Johnson (40) while fellow Bucks Ray Allen (34) watches helplessly, during play at Key Arena in Seattle on November 16. The Sonics dominated the Bucks leading much of the game by 20 points (Reuters photo)

Chile qualify for finals with 3-0 win

SANTIAGO (AFP) — Chile took the fourth and final World Cup qualifying berth in the South American Group Sunday when they defeated Bolivia 3-0 and booked their passage thanks to a superior goal difference — the visitors finishing the match with just eight men.

Goals from Barrera (24), Salas (41) and Carreno (85) sealed the home win which delighted a packed 75,000 crowd.

As Bolivian nerves frayed and frustration set in Cesar Baldovino (55), Ochoaizpur (62) and Sanchez (86) were all ordered off by Brazilian referee Souza Mendonca.

Uruguay win eight-goal clash

In Maldonado, Uruguay and Ecuador, already out of the running for a place in next year's World Cup finals in France, played out a final eight-goal encounter here Sunday with Uruguay clinching a 5-3 victory.

Saralegui (3, 12), Abreu (48, 50) and Aguilera (63) were the Uruguay marksmen while Graziani (2, 60, 65) scored a hat-trick for the visitors.

Both sides finished with 21 points from 16 matches but Ecuador took sixth place honours because of superior goal difference.

Peru win — but fail to qualify

In Lima, Peru scored a 1-0 victory over Paraguay in Sunday's South American Zone World Cup qualifying group — but it was not enough to put them into next year's finals in France.

Peru clinched their win thanks to a 36th minute goal from Soto — but they finished down in fifth place in the Group.

Argentina and Colombia draw 1-1

In Buenos Aires, Argentina and Colombia, already sure of their places in the World Cup finals in France next year, played out a 1-1 draw in their final South American Group clash here Sunday.

Valderrama scored for the visitors after just ten minutes but Argentina came back with a 69th minute goal from Caceres.

South American Group final standings

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
• Argentina	16	8	6	2	23	13	30
• Paraguay	16	9	2	5	21	14	29
• Colombia	16	8	4	4	23	15	28
• Chile	16	7	4	5	32	18	25
Peru	16	7	4	5	19	20	25
Ecuador	16	6	3	7	22	21	21
Uruguay	16	6	3	7	18	21	21
Bolivia	16	4	5	7	18	21	17
Venezuela	16	0	3	13	8	41	3

• Qualify for next year's World Cup finals in France

Ivanisevic top of aces in ATP Tour

PARIS (AFP) — Goran Ivanisevic served more aces than anyone else on the ATP Tour this year but Britain's Greg Rusedski had the best second serve.

Ivanisevic slammed down 1,048 aces in 71 matches, an average of 14.7 per match, while Rusedski tallied 989 in as many matches and Holland's Richard Krajicek served 987 aces in 68 matches.

Rusedski averaged 54 per cent on second service points, one percentage point better than Chile's Marcelo Rios and American World No. 3 Michael Chang.

Rusedski, Krajicek and world number one Pete Sampras all won 91 per cent of their service games.

Alex Corretja, fellow Spaniard Felix Mantilla and Chang were the best returners of serve.

ATP service game leaders

• Aces	
1. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	1,048 in 71 matches
2. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	989 in 71 matches
3. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	987 in 68 matches
• 1st serve percentage	
1. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)	73 %
2. Albert Costa (Spa)	69 %
3. Marcelo Filippini (Uru)	68 %
• 1st serve points won	
1. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	86 %
2. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	84 %
3. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	83 %
• 2nd serve points won	
1. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	54 %

2. Marcelo Rios (Chi)	53 %
3. Michael Chang (USA)	53 %
• Service games won	
1. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	91 %
2. Richard Krajicek (Ned)	91 %
3. Pete Sampras (USA)	91 %

• Break points saved	
1. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)	71 %
2. Greg Rusedski (Gbr)	69 %
3. Thomas Muster (Aut)	68 %

Return of serve leaders

• Points won returning 1st serve	
1. Alex Corretja (Spa)	34 %
2. Michael Chang (USA)	33 %
3. Karol Kucera (Cze)	33 %

• Points won returning 2nd serve	
1. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)	59 %
2. Felix Mantilla (Spa)	57 %
3. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)	56 %

• Break points converted	
1. Carlos Moya (Spa)	46 %
2. Sergi Bruguera (Spa)	46 %
3. Alex Corretja (Spa)	46 %

• Return games won	
1. Felix Mantilla (Spa)	33 %
2. Michael Chang (USA)	33 %
3. Alex Corretja (Spa)	33 %

Hawks remain undefeated; Suns beat Rockets

ATLANTA (AP) — Dikembe Mutombo had 19 points and 14 rebounds as the Atlanta Hawks increased the NBA's best record to 10-0 by beating the Los Angeles Clippers 89-83 Sunday night.

The Hawks, five wins shy of the league record of 15 to start a season, have won their last seven games by margins of no more than six points.

Brent Barry gave the Clippers their final lead, 72-71, with a layup with 8:24 to play. Mutombo made a layup to put the Hawks ahead 73-72 and start an 11-4 run, and Atlanta pulled away for its sixth home victory while handing the Clippers their fifth consecutive loss.

Atlanta's Steve Smith, sinking 9-of-10 free throws, also scored 19 points. Christian Laettner added 14 points and seven rebounds in the Hawks' seventh straight win over the Clippers over the last three seasons.

Barry led the Clippers with 21 points, and Darriek Martin added 19.

• Nets 77, Cavaliers 72: In Cleveland, Sherman Douglas scored 25 points and Kerry Kittles 23 as New Jersey beat the Cavaliers in front of the smallest NBA crowd in Cleveland since 1992.

The Nets' starting backcourt outscored Cleveland's 48-12 even though Sam Cassell missed the first half with the flu. Douglas, acquired by the Cavs during the offseason but quickly dealt to New Jersey, kept the poor-shooting Nets in the game with 14 points in the first half while Cassell was resting.

Cleveland, which beat the defending champion Chicago Bulls in its last home game, played like the sloppy, pre-Shawn Kemp Cavs in front of the smallest crowd at gund arena since it opened in 1994 — only 12,860 on a cold, miserable night near Lake Erie.

Kemp, who scored 18 points in his previous two games, had 14 points and 11 rebounds and played the final eight minutes with five fouls.

• Suns 96, Rockets 94: In Phoenix, Cliff Robinson hit a jumper from the free-throw line with three-tenths of a second left, allowing Phoenix to come back from 16 points down for its best season start since 1984.

Clyde Drexler, whose 3-pointer tied it

with 14 seconds to go, took an in-bounds pass and got off a final shot, but hit the top of the backboard, and the Rockets absorbed their fourth straight loss.

Kevin Johnson had 30 points, 10 rebounds and six assists for the Suns, who started 6-1 for the first time in 13 years. Jason Kidd added 21 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

Hakeem Olajuwon had 22 points, 12 rebounds and five blocks, but nobody else had more than 13 for the Rockets.

• Snipers 119, Bucks 99: In Seattle, Vin Baker scored 20 points, and Jim McIlvaine had 10 points and 10 rebounds in his first start of the season for Seattle.

Eight players were in double figures as the Sonics reached a season-high in scoring while beating the Bucks for the eighth straight time in Seattle. Detlef Schrempf added 19 points and Gary Payton 16.

Baker had 14 points on 6-for-7 shooting in the first half in his first game against his former team. Baker had four dunks in the opening half as the Sonics led 68-45 at half-time. Milwaukee never got closer than 16 points in the second half.

Ray Allen led Milwaukee with 21 points, and Glenn Robinson added 18. The Bucks concluded a four-game road trip with a 1-3 record.

• Lakers 121, Grizzlies 95: In Inglewood, California, Eddie Jones scored 28 points, and Nick Van Exel added 24 as Los Angeles matched the best start in franchise history with its eighth consecutive victory.

The last time the Lakers started a season perfectly was an 8-0 run in 1987-88, which they capped with their last NBA title.

Jones and Van Exel shot so well, Shaquille O'Neal got lost in the shuffle with 14 points and five rebounds.

Sbareef Abdul-Rahim led Vancouver with 26 points.

TODAY AT

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Fran Drescher & Timothy Dalton ... in
THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Patrick Stewart & Jonathan Frakes ... in
STAR TREK FIRST CONTACT

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

PLAZA

Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
AL MASEER (Arabic)

Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

CONCORD

Rowan Atkinson... in
MR. BEAN

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD "2"
SLEEP WALKERS

Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only

GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN
Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in
AL MASEER (Arabic)

Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival

Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30

GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN
ONE FINE DAY

Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

HERCULES

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00

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Israelis vow to stop Palestinian census in Arab east Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani vowed Monday to prevent the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) from including east Jerusalem in its first ever census.

"We will take strong action to prevent this," Mr. Kahalani told AFP, adding that he would bring up the issue of Palestinian census plans in east Jerusalem with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert has raised an alarm over the census in the occupied territories and called on the government to stop

Palestinian plans to include east Jerusalem in the headcount, Israel Radio said.

The PNA is expected to start its first ever census on Dec. 10 and census officials have said it will cover the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the eastern sector of Jerusalem.

Israel occupied east Jerusalem in 1967, declaring it part of its "unified capital." Since the creation of the PNA in 1994, it has worked to prevent any moves implying Palestinian sovereignty in the city.

The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of an independent state. The fate of the city is due to be

worked out in long-delayed negotiations over a final peace treaty between the two sides.

Some 160,000 Palestinians live in east Jerusalem, without Israeli citizenship, while Israel has moved approximately an equal number of Jews into the sector since it occupied it.

East Jerusalem Palestinians are included in Israeli censuses, but there has not been a census in the West Bank and Gaza since a count taken just after the 1967 war, the results of which were never published.

Likud deputies meet to discuss toppling Netanyahu — press

TEL AVIV (AFP) — With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu out of the country, deputies from his Likud bloc were set to meet Monday amid widespread reports that senior party figures were determined to oust the Israeli leader.

"I think we have to expect some dramatic political developments over the next two or three weeks," said Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo, a top Likud member linked to efforts to replace Mr. Netanyahu.

A group of Likud leaders met secretly Sunday to discuss ways of toppling Mr. Netanyahu as both party chief and prime minister, according to reports in Israel's main newspapers and on public radio.

The Likud group in parliament was scheduled to meet Monday for further talks on Mr. Netanyahu's recent actions despite efforts by the prime minister's allies to postpone the gathering until he returns later this week from a visit to the United States.

Monday's meeting was ostensibly called to discuss Mr. Netanyahu's handling of a Likud central committee meeting last week at which delegates voted to abandon a system of primary elections for choosing the party's candidates for parliament, prime minister and local government posts.

Nearly all Likud leaders opposed the move, which ana-

lysts said will give Mr. Netanyahu unprecedented control over the process of picking candidates for parliament and ensure that he would remain the Likud choice for prime minister in the event of early elections.

The parliamentary group was expected to form a special commission to investigate how the vote on the primary issue was carried out, the press reports said.

During the convention, Mr. Netanyahu publicly supported fellow Likud ministers in demanding that the vote on primaries be postponed, while at the same time his top aides lobbied successfully for an immediate decision on the matter.

According to Likud officials, Monday's meeting will demand a formal enquiry into the role of Mr. Netanyahu and his chief of staff, Avigdor Lieberman, in pushing through the vote.

The enquiry will notably look into who printed and distributed pre-marked ballots in favour of cancelling the primaries and who hired a cameraman to film Likud leaders who opposed the vote during the convention.

While the official focus of Monday's Likud meeting was to be the handling of the party convention, all major Israeli newspapers reported Monday that the real target was Mr. Netanyahu himself.

The Haaretz said a group of

Likud deputies were examining ways to wrest control of the party from the prime minister as a first step towards ousting him as prime minister.

Under electoral legislation which first came into effect last year, Mr. Netanyahu was directly elected prime minister by the voters.

He can be removed if a majority of the 120-member Knesset votes a motion of no confidence, which would prompt general elections. If 80 deputies vote against Netanyahu, new elections for prime minister would be held without dissolving parliament.

At Sunday's meeting, several Likud deputies discussed the possibility of forming a breakaway group in parliament, Haaretz said.

If the rebels can garner the support of the party's 22 members, they could split from Mr. Netanyahu while retaining the Likud name and party finances.

Another option under study was to have seven Likud deputies join the opposition in a vote of no confidence, Mr. Netanyahu's eight-party coalition has a total of 66 seats in parliament.

The dissident camp in Likud is reportedly headed by Communications Minister Limor Livnat and former ministers Benny Begin and Dan Meridor, who both quit government earlier this year in disputes with Mr. Netanyahu.

Turkey's Erbakan stakes political future

ANKARA (AFP) — Former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan is to enter a final plea Tuesday in a trial which might end in the dissolution of his pro-Islamic Welfare Party and his own arrest.

Prosecutor Vural Savas has asked the constitutional court to abolish the party on charges it had become a centre for activities undermining the secular state and thus was incompatible with the constitution.

A decision against the Welfare Party would mean that Mr. Erbakan would lose his seat in parliament and thus the immunity which prevented his prosecution earlier over allegations of incitement to hatred, Turkish dailies said Monday.

The allegations reportedly stemmed from Mr. Erbakan's contention in April 1994 that his party would in any case achieve power. "The only question is whether it will be peacefully or after blood-letting," he said.

The Hurriyet and Sabah dailies said that the allegations were on file in parliament and would be forwarded to the state security court if Mr. Erbakan lost his parliamentary immunity.

The ex-premier, 71, and several other party leaders could also be hanged from politics for five years if

their party were abolished.

A decision by the court is expected by the end of the year.

Mr. Erbakan became prime minister in June 1996 but his rule was marred by major disputes with the generals over creeping Islamisation in the country and ended a year later following heavy pressure by the army.

He was replaced by conservative Mesut Yilmaz, whose secular three-party coalition won a parliamentary confidence vote with the help of more than 30 defecting deputies who had in the past backed Mr. Erbakan's Islamist-led cabinet.

head of another watchdog group, the Algerian Human Rights Defence League, Abdemour Ali-Yahia have taken part in demonstrations to call for information about the fate of those whom they say were arrested by security forces.

Mr. Ghachir called on the Algerian government to reply clearly to reports by international human rights organisations, rather than merely to utter "formal criticisms without addressing the contents."

Second in the list of Algerian grievances is "the behaviour of the administration and security services towards its citizens."

Relatives of missing people, mostly women, led by the

Missing people 'biggest' rights problem in Algeria — league

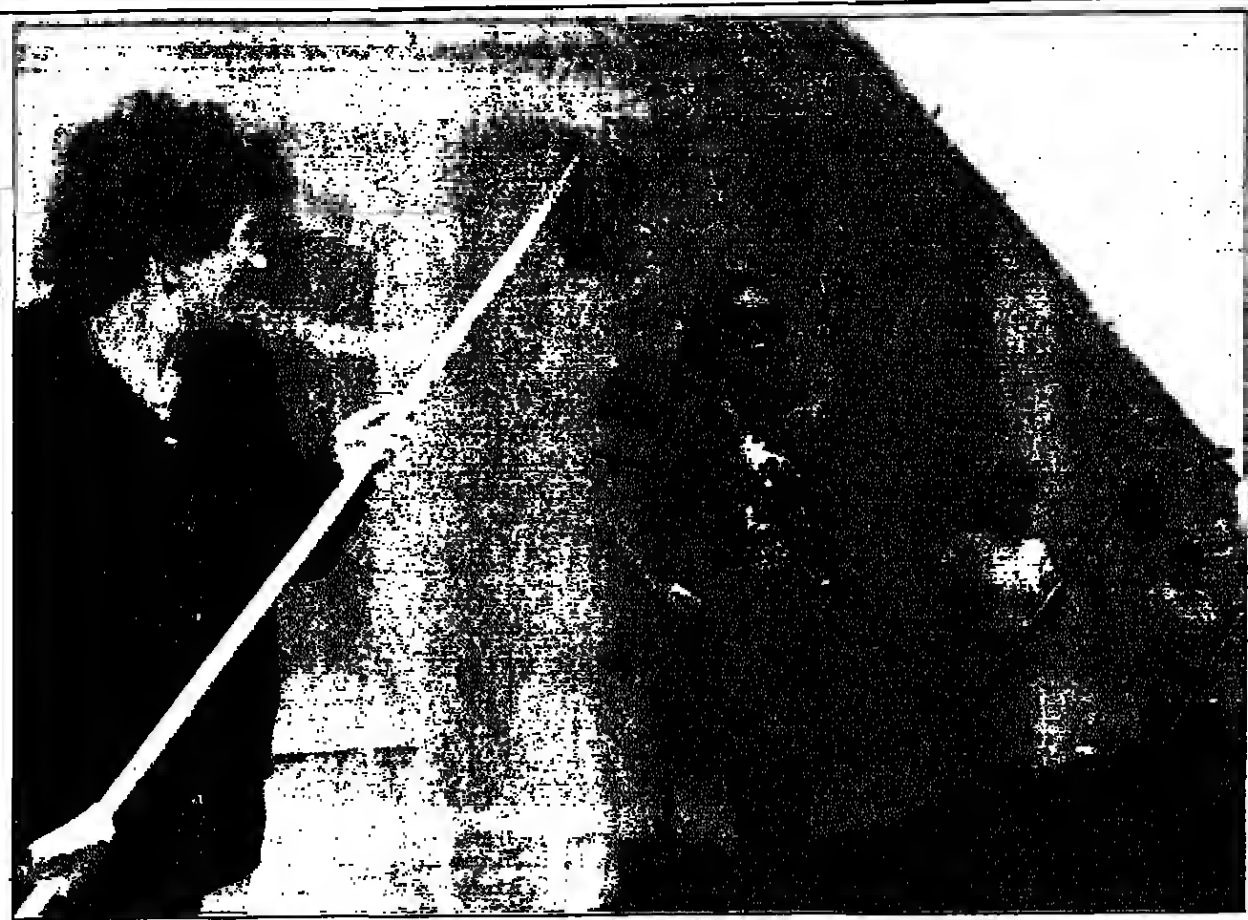
ALGIERS (AFP) — Missing people constitute the greatest human rights problem in Algeria, the head of the Algerian Human Rights League, Boudjemaa Ghachir, has declared, according to the daily Al Khabar on Monday.

The country has been torn since early 1992 by Islamist insurgency and crackdowns by the security forces at the cost, according to Western estimates, of some 60,000 lives, but Mr. Ghachir told the paper that "disappearances" of people were the "biggest

human rights problem in Algeria."

Mr. Ghachir said the league received many complaints about unaccounted-for disappearances, while some people said their relatives had been taken away by security forces, but he said he had no figures for the number of missing.

Relatives of missing people, mostly women, led by the



PINK STREET CELEBRATIONS: A model posing as 'Barbie' poses for photographers with residents of Ash street in Salford, Greater Manchester which has been painted pink and renamed Pink Street to celebrate 'Barbie Pink Month' on Monday. The scheme was the work of urban artist Ben Jones who used a special undercoat of paint which will wash off easily at the end of winter (Rueter photo)

Victim's brother formally lifts death threat for British nurse

RIYADH (AFP) — The brother of a slain Australian nurse has formally waived his right in a Saudi court to call for the death sentence against a British woman on trial for murder, his lawyers said Monday.

The Islamic court in Khobar, eastern Saudi Arabia, has "accepted Mr. [Frank] Gilford's irrevocable waiver" under a \$1.2 million settlement, said the International Law Firm (ILF), representing the victim's family.

It said British and Australian diplomats were in court to sign statements that they witnessed the submission of the waiver on Sunday.

British nurses Deborah Parry, 39, and Lucille McLauchlan, 32, have been on trial since May for the murder in December of their colleague Yvonne Gilford at a medical complex in Dhahran, near Khobar.

McLauchlan, found guilty of being an accessory to murder, has been sentenced to 500 lashes and eight years in jail, while a sentence against Parry has yet to be announced.

If found guilty of intentional murder, Parry would have been sentenced to death by beheading. But Mr. Gilford has accepted \$1.2 million in "blood money" — as authorised under

Islamic law — to spare her life.

Saudi authorities have said Parry now faces a maximum five years in jail if convicted, while the defence has appealed against the sentence on McLauchlan.

In Australia, another lawyer for Mr. Gilford said a children's hospital in Adelaide, South Australia, would receive a donation of around \$750,000 within a week from the brother.

"We'll be taking the money for the hospital and arranging with them for an appropriate occasion, hopefully within the week, for a hand-over ceremony," said Michael Abbott.

Most of the rest of the settlement sum, which has been kept in a trust account until the waiver was submitted in the Saudi court, will be used to pay Mr. Gilford's legal expenses.

A settlement was already agreed and signed in September, according to defence lawyers, but the formal waiver was delayed.

On Nov. 5, the defence withdrew a threat to balve the amount of "blood money" to be paid to the Gilford family. The threat was issued because McLauchlan, sentenced in late September, no longer faced the threat of death.

CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA PRESS STATEMENT ON ADVANCE FEE FRAUD/SCAM YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED

1. Since the early 1990s, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has endeavoured to combat the scourge of Advance Fee Fraud/Scam being perpetrated by fraudsters via letters, telefax, telex, etc., both locally and overseas, and cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

To date, the CBN has placed advisory advertisements in over 80 newspapers and magazines in 12 languages in 36 countries. In its effort to forewarn all corporations and individuals who are likely to fall prey to the scam and thereby help stamp out the proliferation of Advance Fee Fraud, a.k.a "419." Furthermore, the Bank replies routinely to all enquiries relating to the scam letters, telefax etc., to the effect that the "claims" are bogus and fraudulent and that the claimants are being duped. Appropriate Embassies and High Commissions in Nigeria are also furnished with copies of the correspondence emanating from their countries to prevent rulation of their nationals.

2. Unfortunately, the scam has continued unabated, even with increasing sophistication, because of the criminality, avarice and greed of the so-called victims of the scam, who are also villains. The bogus "business" proposals/deals which run into millions of U.S. dollars manifest fraudulent intentions ab initio, which should ordinarily put any responsible and law abiding person on inquiry. However, driven by fraudulent tendency, greed and the urge to make quick and easy money at the expense of Nigeria, many of the so-called victims have continued to ignore the warnings of the Central Bank of Nigeria, to the effect that such transactions are bogus and fraudulent.

3. To recapitulate, an advance fee fraud/scam takes various forms. A typical one starts with a letter of solicitation, followed by telefax or telex messages. The letters often offer to transfer huge amounts of money, usually in U.S. dollars, purported to be part proceeds of certain contracts, to the addressee's bank account, to be shared in some proportion between the writer and the addressee. A favourable response to the letter is followed by excuses why the funds cannot be remitted readily and subsequently by demands for proportionate share of payment of various "taxes" to facilitate the processing and remittance of the funds. The use of false Government, Central Bank of Nigeria, Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, etc. documents is a common practice. The fraudsters usually request that the transaction be done under the cover of confidentiality. Sometimes, the "victims" are invited to Nigeria where they would be given red-carpet reception and attended to by the fraudsters posing as Nigeria Government or Central Bank officials. To consummate the "transaction," the "victim" would be required to pay advance fee for various reasons, e.g. Processing fees, unforeseen taxes, licence fees, registration fees, signing/lawyers fees, National Economic Recovery Fund fees, insurance coverage release fees, VAT, etc. Collection of these advance fees is actually the real objective of the scam. A recent variant of the scam, directed primarily at charitable organisations and religious bodies overseas, involves bogus inheritance, under a will. Again the sole aim is to collect the advance fees described as one form of inheritance tax or the other.

4. The Central Bank of Nigeria has taken this Initiative of once

again warning the business community and individuals because of its concern to maintain the good name of the Bank and its public standing as well as those of its senior executives. Often, the names of the Bank, members of its top management team, including the Governors (past and present) and the Deputy Governors, together with those of highly placed Government Officials, have been fraudulently used and abused by the fraudsters with reckless abandon, to lend credibility and respectability to the scam. As on previous occasions, the Central Bank of Nigeria wishes through this medium, to warn all and sundry about the existence and the modus operandi of the international criminal syndicates whose nefarious activities have been a source of embarrassment to the Bank and the Nigerian Government.

5. On numerous occasions, the so-called victims of the "419" scam have brought lawsuits against the Central Bank of Nigeria, all of which the Bank has defended successfully. In a recent landmark judgement on an advance fee scam lawsuit brought by Larry Sorth and Mr. & Mrs. Tel Vs. The Central Bank of Nigeria, et al, the issues of advance fee fraud, impostors and Clearing House banks were decided on by Hon. Justice Charles A. Sharn of the United States of America District Court (Eastern District of Missouri). The case was decided in favour of the Central Bank of Nigeria. The judge ruled that the case of the plaintiffs — Messrs. Sorth and Tel — was not sustainable, because they neither engaged in any commercial transaction with the defendant, nor had contact with genuine Central Bank of Nigeria officials, nor with any official of the Federal Government of Nigeria. The judge further noted that the documents tendered by the plaintiffs as evidence were forgeries and that they were, from the onset, aware that the transactions were bogus, fraudulent, and too good to be true. We hope that this landmark Court decision among many others decided in favour of the Bank would serve as a sufficient warning to all those who do not heed our advisory advertisements and who would subsequently like to seek relief from the courts after falling "victim" to advance fee scam transactions.

6. The Central Bank of Nigeria is once again warning all recipients of such fraudulent letters, that there are no contract payments trapped in the Bank. Also, that all documents, pertaining to these "payments," "claims" or "transfers," purportedly issued by the Bank, its Senior Executives or the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria are all forgeries, bogus and fraudulent. These documents do not originate from the Bank or the Government. They are not authentic. YOU ARE THEREFORE, WARNED AND ADVISED, IN YOUR OWN INTEREST, TO IGNORE THE "GET-RICH-QUICK" BUSINESS SOLICITATIONS. The Central Bank of Nigeria Implores you to assist in the fight against these criminal syndicates by reporting any solicitation to your local law enforcement agencies or the local International Police Organisation (INTERPOL).

7. For the avoidance of doubt, it should be re-stated that the Central Bank of Nigeria will not accept responsibility for any loss sustained by any person or corporation that fails to heed our warnings.

8. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE! YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED AGAIN!!

CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA,

Samuel Ladoke Akintola Way, P.M.B 0187, Garki, Abuja, NIGERIA.

The Embassy of Nigeria, Baghdad once again takes this opportunity to stress that under no circumstance should anyone respond to any business proposal from Nigeria without first seeking and obtaining a status report from the Nigerian Embassy on the persons or companies making such proposals.

Embassy of Nigeria Baghdad 009641243517

مكتبة ابن بطوطة

Givenchy's McQueen stages show in Moscow underground

MOSCOW (AFP) — British designer Alexander McQueen paraded his Givenchy 1997-98 Autumn-Winter collection in the rare setting of a Moscow underground rail depot. Hundreds of guests gathered Sunday evening at the Mayakovskiy station, striking off to the end of the line by underground train. Surrounded by a tangle of cables and tracks, the show for the Paris couture house Givenchy got underway in a train depot, which, like the underground stations is usually off-limits to cameras. Under the watchful eye of police officers and smart red-suited underground officials, some 20 male and female models stalked the catwalk, the women teetering at times on skyscraper heels.

Queen not to abdicate

LONDON (AFP) — Queen Elizabeth II has no intention of abdicating in favour of her son Charles, who in turn will not waive his own right to the throne, a former royal aide said in an interview with the BBC to be broadcast Monday. "It's an extraordinary idea, abdication, generation skipping. It isn't going to happen," said Simon Gimson, former adviser to the queen's private secretary, Sir Robert Fellowes. Recurring press speculation has the 71-year-old monarch abdicating in favour of the Prince of Wales, who celebrated his 50th birthday last week, and/or the prince deciding that his son William would succeed his grandmother directly.

Spice Girls deny bust-up, admit to nerves

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's pop sensations the Spice Girls denied rumours of a bust-up on Sunday but admitted to being nervous about returning home from a European tour after a barrage of bad publicity. A new spokesman for the trouble-plagued group said Geri Halliwell, or "Ginger Spice," "told me that everything was fine between them last night and they were all together in their hotel" in Rome. "They have not been affected so far" by what has been reported as their worst week since their meteoric rise to stardom, spokesman Alan Edwards said. But he said the five viewed coming back to Britain after their European promotional tour with "a little trepidation ... It's just coming back to face the media."

World's most expensive cigar bought for \$660

GENEVA (R) — A buyer paid \$16,400 for a box of 25 rare Cuban "Trinidad" cigars at an auction in Geneva on Sunday. Auctioneers Christie's said the price of \$660 per cigar set a new auction record. The previous mark was \$462 at a May auction of 25 Trinidad cigars from the special selection of the Cuban national factory generally reserved for heads of state and other dignitaries, Christie's said.

Kennedy, 'the punk violinist,' comes of age

LONDON (AFP) — Nigel Kennedy, the virtuoso violinist who shocked Britain's classical music establishment, has cast off his punk paraphernalia, taken a trip to the hairdresser, and relunched a second career as a serious musician. After five years of silence, Kennedy, mellowed by fatherhood — and the marketing wizards at his record company EMI — is barely recognisable. Known in the 1980s as "the punk violinist," Kennedy has not quite graduated to evening dress suits, but he has moved on from the distressed jeans look and unkempt hair.